

THE
HISTORY
OF
JULIA BENSON:

IN
A SERIES OF LETTERS;
FOUNDED ON WELL-KNOWN FACTS.

TENDING
To Guard the MIND from the
INDULGENCE OF UNLAWFUL PLEASURES,
And the FATAL EFFECTS of
FEMALE RESENTMENT.

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum!

VOL. II.

DUBLIN:

Printed by CHARLES LODGE, Church-Street.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

THE
COTTAGE

JULIA BUNSON

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS

TO A MOTHER AND HER SON

BY JULIA BUNSON

TO WHICH IS ADDED A POEM BY

INDUSTRY OF UNIVERSAL FRIENDSHIP

AND THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF

THE MATE RECOMMENDATION

BY JULIA BUNSON

VOY. II

DUBLIN:

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MDCCLXXXVII.

THE HISTO

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H I S T O R Y

O F

JULIA BENSON.

Mr. MELVILLE, to Mr. FREDERICK.

(In Continuation.)

THE old devil left her upon this; when she was gone I remarked the poor girl's countenance, and saw in it as lively a picture of terror and despair as imagination could paint. She had not been long before the door opened again, when in came Sir George with his bawd, and two maids; Sir George addressed her thus:

"Miss Samphier, once more I make you offers that are highly advantageous. I again repeat it that I will settle two hundred pounds a year on you;—here is a bank-note of an hundred for ready pocket-money;—your mother shall be released, and her debt forgiven: Will you comply?"

"No; by heaven I will not."

"Then to your business."

Upon this, they began to undress her by violence, one holding her hands behind her: there

was

was a large couch in the room; they presently made bare her neck which Sir George began to make free with; Miss Sampher struggled, kicked and screamed. It was high time I thought to interpose, I winked at Bob to be ready, when, on a sudden, bursting open the door, we appeared, to the no small confusion of the whole gang.

Sir George looking at the door, Bob perceived his motion of sidling round, fixed himself directly before it. I broke the silence by speaking thus to the Baronet,

“ Is this manly, Sir George!—You may well be confused, Sir, but I am come not only to rescue innocence, but to punish villainy. Where is Miss Benson?”

“ I don’t at all understand this conduct, Sir,—nor what business you have here—I—”

“ This is no time for talking nonsense, or asking impertinent questions. Tell me at once where Miss Benson is, or by heaven this sword shall penetrate your heart.”

(Dropping on his knees). “ For heaven’s sake do not kill me, and I will tell you all—I—I—I—I know nothing of her.”

“ Lying villain, death is your portion; this old barradan of iniquity said, within half an hour, you had her in limbo. This instant tell me where she is, or I’ll run you through—”

“ For God’s sake, Mr. Melvill—I know nothing of her as I live.”

“ Oh! Sir—(said the Bawd) Sir George speaks truth, and, upon my word, I said that to this good lady only to frighten her.”

“ To this good lady I why thou infernal imp of hell, was not she as good a lady five minutes ago? But I will take especial care of you, believe me.”

“ Whether

“ Whether you speak truth or not I find I must believe you ; but, Sir George, this will not do,—your villainy must have a punishment, which you have not experienced yet. There hangs your sword—rise—Bob ! let him come by you, and turn the woman to the other end of the room.—There, Sir—now take your sword and come on.—

“ Mr. Melvill—this conduct of your’s is what I cannot comprehend :—I know nothing of Miss Benson,—and there is Miss Sampher, in God’s name take her ;—but I do not chuse to fight two at once. I will meet you upon some other occasion.”

“ That is as much as to say that you, Sir George, are a plain, absolute, and palpable coward ; and will, I doubt not, prove so on your other occasion. As to Miss Sampher, I shall take her with me, and likewise this worthy old lady,—come, madam.”

I then made a sign to Bob to open the door, and to take the old woman under his arm, which he did very manfully, and I, leading Miss Sampher, left the room, and departed the house ;—I took the lady in the chaise, and directed Bob to take another for the old woman. As soon as we arrived in town, we laid information against this princess of bawds, and she was immediately committed to goal ; and a warrant is also issued against Sir George and the two servants. What the event of the prosecution will be, I know not. Poor Miss Sampher was fuller of gratitude than can be expressed.—I carried her home with me ; related the affair to my sister, and I have insisted on her making my house her own, till she gets some settled dependence on which she can rely. I have also gained the mother’s release without any payment, by laying

laying the whole affair before the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

Thus the matter has ended; a good conclusion undoubtedly. But I am not one jot nearer my purpose. My only aim was to discover Miss Benson, and in that I am quite disappointed: but I must, however, think that Sir George has nothing to do with her absence. He was in such a profound fright, that had he trapanned twenty girls, all, I will answer for it, would have been surrendered at once. I am very clear in this—I must, therefore, take some other method to discover this uncommon woman's retreat. What she can aim at in remaining concealed, I cannot conjecture. If she has any intention of marrying her nobleman, she certainly would not fly from him, just when he and his friends had taken such care to serve her. I know not how to account for this, all is mysterious.

The young soldier is quite restless to find out his benefactress, he talks of nobody else,—lays an hundred plans to discover what evil has befallen her, but presently finds them all impracticable. We have talked over her affairs, and are clearly of opinion, that the will under which her brother has cheated her of her fortune, is a vile forgery,—but how to discover it is a matter that puzzles us extremely. What confirms me in this, is the strange abrupt visit I had from a person I never saw before—of which I gave you an account.—That man certainly came to offer a discovery of importance to her, if she would bribe him to it; how unlucky was it that she was not at home!

After all these adventures, my dear Frederick, I must still own that I am by no means cured of my folly. I yet love a woman, who certainly does not

JULIA BENSON.

5

not love me ; but, in all probability loves another. This is a terrible situation, and grating to one's pride. But the mischief is, that a blind affection lets all other passions at defiance. If I was certain of my fate,—if it was clear that she was engaged to another, I think I should have philosophy enough to act rationally ; but the cruel uncertainty, in which I live, tempts me to a continuance of misery. Yet in the midst of all my misery, let me exculpate Miss Benson. She never gave me any encouragement,—never fed me with the most distant hope ;—nay, she knows not that I love her.—It is I alone that am the fool and deserve the ridicule, which such folly ought ever to meet with.

Yours,

RICHARD MELVILL.

LETTER XXIV.

Sir PHILIP EGERTON to Lord WILLIAM W—

THESE are a fatality hangs over all your affairs with Miss Benson, that I know not how to account for, or to remedy. A little while ago, I wrote to you, full of hope and confidence, that your unhappiness was at an end. Since that time an accident has happened, which throws us all into confusion, and will be a bar to your enjoyment — how long I cannot say.

Miss Benson has been for some time engaged in a law-suit with her brother about the fortune she received from Mr. Mellish. I apprehended it was some litigious fellow that wanted more than his share, and that the matter was of no great

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THE HISTORY OF

consequence. But I was much mistaken. The brother claimed no less than all she has, and eight thousand pounds more. He carried his suit by producing a will, (by the way strongly suspected of being a forgery) and had the infamy to throw his sister in prison for what she could not pay; her house and furniture were seized, and the villain exulted in his triumph, which proved the grave of his humanity. You may suppose we did not leave her in the prison—your father immediately paid the brother's demand, and bought all her effects of him at his own price. I hurried to the prison to release her and bring her back to her house. It was with great difficulty she was to be seen—she would not leave the prison. And, though I got her out of it, by pretending a warrant from the Lord Chief Justice for her removal, yet I discovered a sentiment in her, which gave me no great hope. I saw that she had an unconquerable pride—and that she could not endure the thought of living dependant.—She told me, after I got her home, that she was determined never to marry—nor enter into, or renew any connection for the future. I expostulated with her on this head—but I saw a stern resolution in her manner, that made me tremble. “ While she had a fortune, (she said) and with it of course the respect of the world, she could converse on terms of equality. Our sex is contemptible the moment they are dependant. I am now a beggar, and will never be insulted with the compassion of people that I hate or despise ” I took my leave, fearing that she would take some course to disappoint our wishes. I returned next morning—she was gone out. I went again in the afternoon—she was not come home yet, though expected to dinner.—I then suspected she had given us the

slip,

JULIA BENSON.

7

rip, and so it proved. Her maid missed a small trunk and a few other things, which she certainly took with her; and what increased our suspicions, was her sending out all her servants but one in different ways; and in their absence she certainly departed. Some bank notes, which the Duke had desired me to lay on the toilette, remained there.

I immediately set myself to consider what course she had taken—upon what plan she had gone—or with what design. She had no money with her, or at least, not more than the remains of what was usually in the house. As to her father's in Sussex, it was the last place in the world to seek her at—and I had never heard her mention a country friend, to whose house it was probable she was gone.

Returning again to the house, I questioned and cross-examined all the servants, but it was plain they knew nothing of the matter. At this I was not surprised; for no servant was ever her confidant. She keeps them all at a great distance, scarcely ever speaking to any of them; though an admirable mistress, and one whom they all love to excess. I thought it proper to examine all the chairmen, porters, and hackney-coachmen, from St. James's to Charing-Cross. By this means I made a discovery which was of some consequence, as it led, though not to the finding her—yet to a knowledge of her designs. She beckoned to a chairman out of her dining-room window, about eleven in the morning;—when he came to the door, he found her at it with a trunk, which she ordered him to take up and follow her; she walked to Soho-Square, made the man set the trunk down by the rails; she then paid him, and sat down upon it, keeping a handkerchief at

her face all the while. The chairman took his money—left her ; and knows nothing further of her motions. This she certainly did to prevent discovery, and in truth the plan was effectual.

I went to your father to inform him of what had happened. He was much surprized, and yet more vexed ; for he had set his heart on the match's being soon concluded—and this unlucky event breaking all his measures, disconcerted him infinitely. He said it was certainly owing to her high spirit—that disdain being indebted to any one ;—he liked her the better for it—and added, that she was much mistaken, if she imagined her money had any weight either with him or his son—that her own excellencies were superior to all the money in the world ; “ but, concluded he, Sir Philip, we must find her, and attempt at least to bring her to reason ; for what will my son say, if we have hurried him home for this ! ”

In this situation I found myself more deeply engaged than I intended ; for although I was ready to exert every effort in my power to advance the happiness of my friend, yet I never dreamt of answering for its success. But believe me, my lord, I shall try every thing to discover her retreat, by making all the enquiries that are possible. When she left Sussex and came to town, she was on a visit at a Mr. Melvill's in German-street, while her house was repairing in Pall-Mall. I met him there, coming like me, to enquire after her ;—his house is kept by his sister, as she was some time with her, possibly she may know some of her country connections, and I intend making the enquiry directly, though it is all quite a hazard whether I shall be able to discover her.

Your's, &c.

PHILIP EGERTON

LET-

LETTER XXV.

Miss BENSON, to Miss EMILIA WATSON.

MY dear Emilia, it is with some satisfaction that I can tell you, my fate is not so bad, as it might be, since I am more reconciled to my retirement than I was. As to your thorough friendship, so evident in your last letter, you may believe me that I do not reject your offers through any improper pride. The sentiment which moves me to keep from dependance and from burthening my friends, my dear, should not be esteemed pride; but a mere opposite to meanness. You was right in your answer to your worthy father. In prosperity I wished to make you a visit; but adversity changes the case. Your making me the mistress of a farm, I laughed at heartily, — and I like the idea; if every thing fails, and I get experience enough under my friend Clevell, I may perhaps make the experiment: — but, prihee, my dearest, do not be so wild as to keep any farm vacant, and repair any houses for me.

I have every day more and more reason to like this honest farmer and his family. They are infinitely attentive to me, full of real humanity, and a great mixture of natural sense. In such characters there is as much merit as in the most brilliant ones we meet in a court. The old man delights to have me walk with him about his fields, and converse with him about his husbandry. I do so continually, and hold myself to be in a fair way of gaining a great store of rural knowledge. I pass my time very agreeably in walking, reading, and working: I have also taken some diversion trout-fishing in farmer Clevell's fields. Now I have mentioned this, I must tell you of a little ad-

venture I had the other day, which did not at all please me

As I was throwing my line, and very intent on the fly, a gentleman appeared close to me, whom I had never seen before. He made me start by crying out, "What sport, Madam?" I stared at him with some surprize, and replied,—"None, Sir." He was a kind of country squire, of a middle age, who was fishing, like myself, for trout. He entered into common place topics—of the weather, the sport, the fish, the river, until, at last, he asked me,

"Pray, madam, may I crave the place you live at?"

"Very near this place, Sir."

"Dear me!—near this place!—I know all the country round,—and never had the happiness of seeing you before."

"Nor would it have been of any consequence if you had not had it now."

"Indeed it would, madam, for I should beg the honour of attending you now and then to the river. It is much more agreeable to fish in company, than alone."

"I am quite of a different opinion—I like better to be alone—and so your servant, Sir.—"

Saying this I left him, and returned home. He made me a low bow,—asked many pardons, and hoped no offence.

As an absolute retirement is what I have sought with the utmost assiduity, and thought myself so happy in finding it, this little adventure did not please me. Of all things I desire nothing so much as to remain absolutely unknown,—and lest fishing should bring me into more scrapes of the same kind, (for I can call them by no other name) I shall take that diversion no more.

Tuesday.

This afternoon as I was at work in my room, one of Clevely's little girls came in, to desire in her mother's name, that I would favour her with my company at tea. I had three or four times received such invitations, and generally accepted of them, as I thought they were pleased with it, —therefore I told her I would wait on her mother. Upon my going down stairs, and entering their best parlour, I found, in the room with them, the gentleman, whom I had met at the river, an old lady his mother, and his two sisters, young ladies of good appearance. I was infinitely chagrined at this rencontre; but determined at once to make the best of it by not opening my lips more than was requisite, and staying only for two dishes at most.

“ This good lady (said the farmer's wife) is my landlady, she has done me the satisfaction of accepting a cup of tea with us, Mrs. Pigott.—”

I made no reply but a slight curtsey; but Mrs. Simpson, for that was her name, addressing herself to me;

“ I find, madam, that you have made a choice of this part of the country for a summer retirement.—I hope you are pleased with it —”

“ Yes, madam, very well pleased with it.—”

“ Why it is a fine rich country, and very retired, though so near London.”

“ Yes, madam.”

“ I did not know, till my son saw you at the river, that we had any stranger in the parish.—I have not seen you at church, madam.”

“ No, madam, I seldom go to church.”

“ No, indeed! that is very strange. But perhaps you are of the Romish religion?”

“ No, madam, I am not.”

“ Or of the Calvinists persuasion?”

“ No,

THE HISTORY OF

"No, madam."

"Possibly the Lutheran?"

"No."

"Pied, perhaps, in the kirk of Scotland?"

"Neither."

"I hope I am not impertinent."

"Not in the least."

"Among the friends, vulgarly called Quakers?"

"You see I am not by my dress."

"There are other religions, such as Anabaptists and Methodists—"

"None of them."

"Possibly a Jew?"

"By no means."

"I hope, madam, you do not think me impertinent— but—"

"Not at all, madam."

"If I should give you no offence—pray, madam, may I ask of what religion you are?"

"Of that of the Houlougrouschoukonskins."

"Of what, madam?"

"I profess the same religion as the Houlougrouschoukonskins."

"And what may that be?"

"I have no time at present to tell you. The treat is a very long one."

By this time I had swallowed two dishes, heartily glad that the time was filled in so ridiculous a manner, without questions which I should have disliked much more. But the lady seeing me move began again.

"Let me beg of you, madam, not to hurry away upon our account.—I fear I have made too free with you."

"Not in the least, madam."

"May I expect the pleasure of your company at

at Sump'n Hall; it is only two miles off;—an agreeable walk in dry weather.—Mr. Clevely will shew you the way."

" I am extremely obliged to you, madam; I will take some opportunity of waiting on you."

" I hope you will, madam, (aid one of the daughters.) We shall endeavour to render the place agreeable to you."

" And whenever you want any fishing (said the gentleman) I am your man—and I beg you will command my service."

To all this I made as civil a return as few words would let me. The old lady pressed me to come on the morrow. I said I could not. " Then next day (replied she)"—and pushed me to briskly with her invitation, that I was forced to put her off rather abruptly, by saying that I could not name the day—but would wait on her.

" Well, (replied she) if we do not see you soon, Betley shall call upon you, and enquire after your health, and shew you the way." To this I answered, that I was much obliged to her; but begged the young lady would not trouble herself—and so the visit ended.

I am less alarmed than if they were fine people. Luckily, it is a thorough country family. The old lady is a widow, with an estate of about eight hundred pounds a year, out of which she supports the son, and his two sisters, as well as herself; after her death, Farmer Clevely tells me the young 'quire will be his landlord—that the old gentleman would not have him brought up to any trade or profession; so he lives, booby like, with his mother.—The daughters are modest, agreeable women, and I dare say would appear sensible, if their mother was not in company; but her orgueficiencies every body's cle. I believe the son is not a fool,

fool, but he is a most uncultivated creature—he puts me more in mind of Will Wimble than of any thing else—a character, which is seldom despicable in any point, because it pretends to nothing further than what it is master off, which is the case with very few others.

I was not in any haste to pay my visit. Some days passed, and the farmer and his wife urged me to go—saying she was a very good woman—and meant me a compliment, by asking me; but I generally put the conversation off, with saying I should go perhaps soon. However, I staid so long, that the Miss Simplics and their brother came to enquire after me, and shew me the way to Simpson Hall—upon this I was obliged to attend them. As we were walking, the eldest of the ladies had some conversation with me; she began with saying, that she hoped I excused the strange freedom of her mamma, in asking so many questions about my religion; but assured me, that she did not mean to be offensive—and said, that she interested herself very much about me; that she did not think I was what I appeared at Clevely's, but a person of fashion, that had retired for some reason or other into the country.

To this observation, which did not please me, I answered, that she was much mistaken—that I was nothing more than I appeared—and no person of fashion—or any thing like it.

"Mama says, Madam, that you must certainly be something above what you appear, by the strangeness of your religion, and by your always being alone—and not desiring to come into company at all. But I hope you will not find any thing disagreeable at our house."

"I am very confident I shall not do that, madam."

"And

"And if mama should happen to tease you with questions, which it must be owned, she is very apt to do to every body, will you be kind enough only to look at me, and I will take you out of the room?"

"There will be no occasion, Miss, for your giving yourself that trouble, as I am not at all offended by any questions."

"We never go to London, and keep not much company from my mama's disliking the London neighbours. She says the country is spoiled by being overrun by upstarts, from the shops of Fleet-street and the Strand. This makes her esteemed proud, though she is very far from being so, and keeps us almost from all society—so that we should be very happy, madam, if you would favour us with your company now and then."

Upon arriving at the mansion, we were met by Mrs. Simpson, in company with a gentleman, who they told me, was the parson of the parish. The old lady began immediately to reproach me for not having been there before. I apologized.

"Madam, (replied she) I have a notion that you are a woman of fashion, who, for some reason or other, have retired for a time into the country—I am therefore desirous of paying you any civilities in my power."

"I am much obliged to you, madam, for your kindness—but indeed you much mistake me—I am no—

"Yes yes, you are of a different species from the swarms of Londoners, that render this neighbourhood disagreeable. Mr. Munster, indeed, says they do good in spending their money here; but I appeal to you, madam, if it is not grating to an ancient family, which has lived five hundred years on the same spot, to find it over-run with tinkers

tinkers and taylors : fruiterers and stay-makers."

" Certainly, madam, they do not improve a neighbourhood.

" I cannot take a walk, but I run my nose against an eelman ; or a ride, but I meet the daughter of a fishmonger on a netted horse, with a hat and feather. My coach is jostled in the road, by that of a lace-maker's ; and I am prevented from getting to my pew at church, by a mob of grocers and chandlers, milliners and mantua-makers."

" Really, ma'am, this is an absolute grievance to you ; but, it is to be hoped these fine people pay you the respect that is due to your family.

" Respect ! yes, they do respect one's family indeed. Their whole business is to shew their wealth, and make themselves look great among the countrymen, and this, they think, is done by paying respect to no body—they take precedence of you—give themselves all manner of airs—drive over you—ride a hunting through your garden—and think every thing may be justified if they keep a pair of horses more than you—or a footman—or dress richer—or eat better---These are our London neighbours!"

" Bad enough, in good truth, madam."

" Yes, yes ; but Mrs. Sincler carries every thing to extremes. They are not so bad, and these same Londoners that offend you so much spend abundance of money in the country. They are a ready market for your tenants to sell their crops and products of all sorts to, and you let your farms in proportion to that advantage."

" Aye, Mr. Webster is always taking their part—and so he would if they were Mahometans. Mrs. Pigot, had I supposed you a mere Londoner I should not have spoken so freely against them,

them, but, as I said before, I think you were not bred in that offensive town—you had a better origin, madam."

" Besides (continued the parson) these are not your only neighbours, you have several families of real fashion, that visit you regularly."

" Yes, but the number is very few—What do you call Sir William Reeves, Mr. Anson, and Sir George Milbourn? These are not neighbours."

At the mention of the name of Sir George, I was struck with fear, as he would, in case he met me, certainly know me, from the encounter we had at Mr. Melvill's."

" Neighbours! (continued the parson) what do you call neighbours?—they visit you very often."

" Do they so (said I to myself) then I will not."

Soon after Mrs. Simpson shewed me her house, and when I entered the room, upon being summoned to tea, who should be there but Sir George?—The moment he saw me—

" Miss Benson!—Madam, your most obedient servant, (making me a profound bow) What brought you into this part of the world?"

" Some business, sir"—and turning to one of the Miss Simpson's, I began a conversation with her, merely to change it from that odious coxcomb. Mrs. Simpson, however, cried out,

" Miss Benson!—See there now!—Did I not tell you, girls, that Mrs. Pigot was not what she seemed?"

" Mrs. Pigot! (exclaimed Sir George) I fear I have made mischief.—Upon my word, madam, if I had thought you had meant to appear under a borrowed name, I would have been more cautious."

" It is of no consequence."

" Truly not of much indeed; for I apprehend

you no longer profess yourself a female Quixot for rescuing damsels in distress."

From this speech, and the manner in which it was made, I saw plainly he was going to make use of this opportunity to revenge himself on me for the transaction at Mr. Melvill's, relating to the affair of the Sampher's—But I determined not to spare him.

" Pray, why should I not now be the female Quixot as well as at any other time?"

" Delicacy, madam, prevents my being explicit—not that you are to blame—to be sure fortune has been rather cross of late."

" True, Sir George, but fortune may do much worse for me; I may use her neglect as badly as you have applied her bounty—when that is the case, you will indeed have reason for your hums and haws, and for those insinuating shrugs."

" Methinks, madam, you are very sarcastical."

" I profess it, Sir George, whenever I have the honour of conversing with you."

" I think it would better become a person in your present circumstances to have more humility."

" Poverty in me, Sir, is no reproach.—Besides, I have reason rather for exultation than humility, to find my poverty rise so much superior to your wealth. Indeed, Sir, I look down upon you with pity."

I made him this speech in a tone and manner that cut him to the heart—he reddened with anger—and only said, in reply to it,—“ that he believed this country would soon find out what respect was due to a fugitive—a run away from a gaol”—and upon that took his leave hastily of Mrs. Simpson.

When he was gone, I explained to her in a few words

words as I could, the reasons for the circumstances, which appeared ~~as~~ enigmatical to her—and gave her a full relation of Miss Sampher's affairs. They all treated his character with very little respect—loaded me with caresses—and in a most friendly manner begged of me to stay the evening—and assured me they should never be better entertained than with my company.

But, my dear Emilia, I have been too much disciplined to vicissitude, to stay longer in this country—and I think my destiny is very cruel to displace me from a situation, in which I could have continued with entire satisfaction. This vile adventure will prove of infinite inconvenience to me—I know not where to go, and may try forty farm-houses, before I find one so much to my purpose as Clevely's. But my evil stars must be obeyed—I must seek another habitation whether I will or not. As this is a critical matter to me, I must determine on conducting myself accordingly without delay—I shall keep this letter open, that I may give you a further account of my motions.

* * * * *

My dear Emilia! I am fated, I believe, to be the sport of fortune; for every day brings me into vile adventures, which terminate in the most grating manner. You must give me your patience while I recite the particulars of a strange affair that has lately happened.

I before told you my resolution of leaving Canefield, and searching for some other retirement. Pursuant to this resolution, I told Farmer Clevely of it, and paid his wife up to my taking leave of them,—they were very much concerned, and used many arguments to persuade me to

change my mind. I believe they would readily have boarded me for nothing, rather than have me go so suddenly. A post-chaise was procured to carry me to Uxbridge, whither I had fixed on going, as I should then be in the main road, and take a stage coach to any place at a distance from London. I had my trunk packed up immediately. The chaise was to have been ready at one o'clock, as it could not come before. It was not with me till three; and then I took my leave of the worthy family.

The boy had not driven me four miles, before he complained that one of his horses had lost a shoe, and that he must have a new one put on; for which he stopped at a smith's, and kept me two hours—soon after the lynch-pin flew out of one of the wheels. This occasioned a fresh delay, and I was forced to walk half a mile almost in the dark to another smith's, where the loss was repaired. Then I got in again, and, after a jumbling, jolting ride of near two hours longer—all the way in the dark—the chaise stopped at the door of what, I thought, the inn at Uxbridge. I alighted, and desiring to be shewed a room, a waiter conducted me up stairs, opened a dining-room door, and ushered me in, asking what I would please to have for supper? I ordered a fowl, and being much fatigued, desired to see the chambermaid, whom I directed to get me a bed directly. I asked two or three questions about Uxbridge and its neighbourhood, which were answered very readily. It was eleven o'clock before I got to bed.

In about a quarter of an hour after, the door of my room opened, and who should appear but the wretch, Sir George Milbourne, dressed with a bag-wig and sword, attended by two women, whose

whose countenances I by no means liked, each of them carrying a candle. I started up in my bed, and Sir George, without any ceremony, withdraw-
ing the curtain, said to me,

" Now, Miss Benton, I think, is the proper time for you to make me some satisfaction for the pretty extraordinary treatment I have received from you more than once. Look you, madam, you are in a house of mine fifteen miles from Uxbridge—all here are at my devotion—I am de-
termined to pass the night with you, either by fair means or foul. Submit at once with a good grace—or with the assistance of these good wo-
men I shall—"

" Stop—Sir George—give me a moment's recollection, and I will answer you."

He stood silent, I made use of these few mi-
nutes to collect my frightened senses, and consider what to do. I found that I was absolutely in his power, and that resistance would be in vain. No-
thing could save me but stratagem—I thought I could deal with him better alone than with his cursed attendants. I cast my eyes upon his sword, could I but be nimble enough to secure it, thought I, I shall be safe—I formed my resolution very speedily—and replied,

" Well Sir—I must own—I must confess you have now got the better of me—I submit, Sir—and since you have got the advantage of me—I hope you will behave like a man of honour and—"

" You charm me, my angel—By heavens I will be as secret as the grave—I will never—"

" Remember my reputation depends on your prudence, I will submit with a good grace at once; but spare my blushes, Sir George—send away your attendants for heaven's sake."

" Away!—leave me—you may go to bed,

Kitty ; do not let me (in a low voice) be disturbed in the morning— tell George he may go to bed—”

“ They left the room, and the baronet entranced with success, which he began to think was partly owing to an affection for his dear person, of which he is immoderately vain, caressed me much—made me an hundred compliments—and began to undress. While he was thus employed, I felt an hundred terrors, but not sufficient to deprive me of my presence of mind—lest I should be disappointed in my attempt on his sword for want of an opportunity—I tied two handkerchiefs together, and formed a slipping noose at one end without being seen by him—with this I purposed watching an opportunity to strangle him, or at least to secure him, or entangle him while I flew to the sword. Upon his coming into bed, through modesty and design, I begged he would look another way—complained of the candles not being out—and on his giving himself a turn, pushed my handkerchief to his eyes in order to blind him—at that instant I watched my opportunity, and slipped the noose over his head. It dropped a little below his shoulders—I tightened it at once with a great exertion of strength, and springing unto him, gave it such a pull, that he was pinioned in an instant. His arms bent back, and close to his side. With all the expedition imaginable, I tied a knot which secured him; and, flying out of bed, seized his sword, which I drew. He was beginning to recover from his astonishment—and struggling so hard as to alarm me, calling out at the same time; but presenting the sword with a fierce air:—“ Villain, this instant is your last, if you stir hand or foot, or speak a syllable.” And pointing it at his heart: now is the time (said I) to revenge myself.” But he

he in a low voice — “ for God's sake — for heaven's sake spare my life ! ”

I did not yet think him secure, and dread his getting loose. With one hand therefore I drew away the upper sheet, holding the sword in the other ; and when I had got it all off — laying down the weapon in a chair within my reach, I put one end of the sheet under him, and pulling it round, began to bind him up in it over the arms and head. He was as quiet as a mouse. I swaddled him up in such a manner, that I did not think it was possible for him to get loose, or even to speak ; but lest I should be mistaken, I did the same with the other sheet, binding him so tight, that he in a half-strangled voice cried out, “ I am suffocated ! — do not strangle me ! ”

Having thus secured him past a possibility of getting loose, I began to think of making my escape. At that moment seeing his clothes lie on a chair, it came into my head to dress myself in them, as the best means of getting off. The idea no sooner struck me than the resolution was taken. I drew on his breeches, and they fitted me exactly, — but then I recollect ed that I had no shirt — my shift would make but a bad appearance ; I shall be happy indeed, thought I, if good luck should lead me to one in these drawers ; when opening a chest, that stood in the room, it displayed at least a dozen, with other linen. I put one on immediately ; delighted with my good fortune. Then drawing on his stockings, and putting on his shoes, &c. I found nothing that would discover me but my hair — this I put into his bag, and stroaking up my trupee, made it set pretty decently, when I had got his hat on. Next I buckled on the sword, and then put on his coat and waistcoat. All this was very awkward to me, and

and was not therefore done with such expedition as I wished for. Being thus accoutré, I examined his pockets. I found a pocket-book stuffed with papers—an etui and in his purse fifteen guineas, both the latter I left behind me on the chair. But the former I took, as I did not doubt but it would afford me some amusement. I then emptied my own pockets of what I wanted; and packed up two of Sir George's shirts in a handkerchief a couple more stocks, two pair of stockings, and some handkerchiefs of my own, with two or three other trifles out of my trunk; then putting one of the candles out, and taking the other in my hand—I sallied forth.

I had two chances of deceiving any body that ill-luck should throw in my way among the females of the house; my being dressed in Sir George's clothes, and my being nearly of his stature. These were lucky circumstances. Besides his voice has a peculiar squeak in it, that I had often taken off; and I thought the same practice might be of admirable use. I went down stairs, without hearing any one. I perceived a stair-case, at the foot of which were some mens shoes and buckles. This, thought I, is the stairs to the men's rooms. Imitating Sir George's voice, I hollered George! at the bottom, who answered presently "Sir!" — "D—n you for a rascal, how often am I to call you—get up this moment." I was now in a great dilemma, which was, whether it were possible for me to appear before the fellow, when he came down, and not be discovered.—I waited till he came down, and then blowing my nose while I spoke, to hide my face — " You, sir, go—put to your horses in the post-chaise this moment—I must go off now on particular business."

" Yes,

"Yes, sir, should I take the mare Kitty, sir, or long legs?"

"Take long legs."

"Yes, sir."

And out he went without dreaming of a deception.

No body else stirred in the house, and in about half an hour the chaise was at the door—I stepped into it saying I would have none of the people go with me, and ordered the man to drive to Uxbridge. All this while he did not seem in the least to suspect the imposition; I imitated Sir George's voice so well, that the man could not well be undeceived. Upon my arrival at Uxbridge, I ordered him to go to the George, which was an inn I had heard of; and without getting out of the chaise, directed him to order a post-chaise and horses immediately. I then told George to wait till five o'clock the next evening for me, and then stepping out of one chaise into the other, I drove off in the London road. At Brentford, I turned off, crossed the Thames, and discharging the chaise, took another for Epsom. Here thinking myself pretty safe from a pursuit; I stopped to take some refreshment, and to plan my future operations.

I was inclined to take a place in some stage coach, to a greater distance from London, to get a fresh farm-house to board in—but I determined to do it as a man, and not as a woman. I like my metamorphosis—I feel an independance—and a satisfaction from being in appearance a man—and on an equality with that sex, which, I must own I hate and despise. It is true, there are some individuals of it that are valuable, and would almost make one esteem the sex for the sake of them. But these few excepted, where are there any that

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do not move one's indignation!—There are, it is true, numbers of women who are as vile as any men can be. But if the whole sex is examined, I am clearly of opinion that the ballance of villainy will be with the men. The activity of their lives hurries them into more mischief, than the quietness of ours will allow; and their education is a great advantage to them. They are, for the most part, brought up in seminaries of vice, folly, and licentiousness. The most agreeable man, therefore, my Emilia, must be the male appearance, with the feminine reality.

My situation is so precarious, and wherever I go, the danger of discovery is so great, that I shall certainly continue in my disguise, but it will be necessary, as soon as possible, to get the other clothes made.—These of Sir George's may only betray me. Sometimes I thought of going down to Sussex thus disguised, and getting acquainted, if I could, with either my father, brother, or some of their friends.

Here, my dear Emilia, I am;—uncertain of my future fate, where I shall go I know not—what is best for me to do equally uncertain:—I think I may be able to— but the waiter now enters with the dinner I have ordered—therefore must, for the present, lay down my pen.

* * * * *

The dinner being over, and the fellow gone, it came into my head to examine Sir George's pocket-book; I took it out, and turning over some of the papers, have made a discovery that astonishes me.—The only way, my dearest, of letting you into the secret without confusion, will be to transcribe some letters I found.—I would send you

you the originals, but they will be wanted for purposes, I hope, of much importance to me.

You remember the history of Lord William W——'s transactions with Signora Zaffini at Milan; and the many reasons I have for considering her as the greatest enemy that ever rose to the disquiet of my life. The following is a letter from her to Sir George.

To Sir GEORGE MILBOURN.

" SIR,

I Cannot comprehend your meaning; did you not tell me, that in case I succeeded, you would reward me with four hundred guineas? This was simply the agreement. Whereas, now, you talk of conditions, which I never heard of before. What can be the meaning of this? It is mischievous to my love that any such connection should have been between us; for now I cannot but construe all these neglects of your's merely as a want of that affection to which I first sacrificed myself. Relent, sir, and do justice to the injured

ZAFFINI."

" To Sir GEORGE MILBOURN.

" SIR GEORGE!

" YOUR answer is by no means satisfactory. Mr. Benson was not to be at the whole expence. It was never mentioned; far less agreed to. You cannot but remember that when I first persuaded you to undertake the journey to Sussex, in which I accompanied you—that your engagement through revenge, as you said, was to make you

your sharers in the expence. I then told Mr. Benson, that from the knowledge I had gained of Mr. Mellish in Italy, and, in particular, by the existence of a will of a later date than that under which Miss Benson inherited, he might very easily gain what might be made appear to be his undoubted right.—He was at first backward in the affair—but you pushed it with vehemence, and after retiring with Mr. Benson, for about an hour, returned to me, and enquired into the expence of my witnesses.—Then it was that I told you I must have the sum of seven hundred pounds deposited immediately: Mr. Benson making many hesitations, you to encourage him, on seeing that he would otherwise flinch, said “I will be half, Mr. Benson.” “Will you, Sir George?” said he, then I agree to the other half.” Something I know passed between you about dividing the spoil, but what agreement you came to, I know not.

“In consequence of that day’s transaction, and only the payment of a part, I procured the witnesses myself, principally, to a will which you know was all a romance.—In consequence of that will you and Mr. Benson divide fifty thousand pounds, and dispute with me about my small reward.

“Was I a common informer or of an infamous character, you might well suppose I might be fooled in this manner. I gave you not only my assistance in this affair, but my heart also—and you owe me not only justice, but an affection which I expected, but in which I am, I doubt, miserably deceived.

“Adieu! I expect a determinate answer immediately, as I purpose setting out for Italy as soon as this affair is over.

ZAFFINI.

To

JULIA BENSON.

29

To Sir GEORGE MILBOURNE.

I Received your answer to my last, but believe me, Sir George, this remittance of one hundred pounds, which is plainly sent by way of expediting my voyage to Italy, instead of satisfaction to a just demand, will not answer your purpose. You are much mistaken if you think I had common motives for engaging in the villainy of procuring you a pack of perjured rascals of my own country to establish the credibility of a will that put so many thousands into the pockets of you and Mr. Benson.— No Sir— REVENGE against the woman was my motive—and I would have you to know that means shall not be wanting to satisfy a similar resentment against you and that lump of stupidity— Benson. I reject your offers, and will either be satisfied or seize that, with ruin to you all, which you refuse to give me by fair means."

ZAFFINI.

To Sir GEORGE MILBOURNE.

I Received your notes—as to the papers you mention I shall not return them. I cannot but consider this acquiescence so very late and ungracious, as forced by my threats rather than granted thro' justice. Jaques, Lacrése, and Villette are gone.— Did you think me such a novice as to keep them after their business was executed?

Yours, &c.

ZAFFINI.

Here's intelligence, my dear Emilia!— Surely this may be made use of to recover my fortune—

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if not I am in a strange dream. Now to explain the use I am to make of this discovery.—In the first place, Sir George, the instant he misses his pocket-book, will do all he can to pursue me, which is no difficult matter. I must therefore away immediately.

My plan is to go directly to London in the first Portsmouth stage that passes, which will be here in half an hour, but I shall take a walk out of town that the people of this house may not know my motions.—The moment I get to London I buy a ready made suit of cloaths with all things suitable. Then I will go directly to Sir Philip Egerton's, and give him a packet containing these letters, with one for myself, pretending that they come from a lady who entrusted me with them.

This is my present scheme.—Adieu, my dear Emilia, believe me ever to remain sincerely
yours,

JULIA BENSON.

MISS BENSON to Sir PHILIP EGERTON.

SIR,

INCLOSED I send you some letters which accident has thrown in my way. They lay open, in the clearest manner, the amazing scene of villainy, which has deprived me of my fortune. Every thing is easy to be accounted for;—now it appears that that extraordinary woman, Zaffini is at the bottom of it.

I shall not yet make my appearance at present, being determined to remain in entire obscurity, rather than live in a dependance which would make

make me contemptible. I am confident I may depend on your friendship to put these papers into hands proper for a new trial, and also for punishing in a suitable manner the whole crew of knaves that are discovered. After the trial is over, if it re-instates me in my just rights, I shall speedily return, otherwise shall never be heard of.

My friends may think this resolution extraordinary—but my introduction into life was too brilliant to make me stoop to such a bitter change of fortune. Dependance is hateful to me, and I cannot think of an intercourse of friendship where all is liberality on one side and only gratitude for me. As to Lord William W—, I sincerely regret him—he is a man I truly valued, and whose friendship I should prize most dearly if I was in a state to return him any thing but poverty. If my fortune is desperate, seriously urge him no longer to think of an unhappy woman who never more can be known to him. Your friendship for him, Sir Philip, should make you warm in executing this part of my commission, for it is my fixed determination.

I remain, &c.

JULIA BENSON.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. MELVILL to MR. FREDERICK.

CONVINCED that Miss Benson will remain in her present retirement, wherever she is gone; to avoid all mankind; or that, if she returns from it, it will not be for me—I have set about in good earnest to conquer a passion that promises

be so utterly fruitless, and hope sometime or other to give you a good account of my being truly a recovered man. That she is a very extraordinary woman cannot be doubted, and it is from the strength of character in her that I judge she will always remain unknown. I never had any clear intelligence of her affair with the nobleman abroad—but nothing can be conjectured of it but its being a love one that was unexpectedly broken off, probably renewable again in England—but whatever it is, it has damped my hopes not a little. If I had ever known that she was engaged, I should have been far enough from falling in love with her—for that is a passion which can never exist without hope. Certainly I should have explained my inclinations to her—then she would have had an opportunity of explaining her situation, or of giving me a positive denial, which would have saved me a world of pain. But all these things have gone adverse, and I must apply the best remedy which my philosophy can afford.

Miss Sampher has gained some intelligence concerning her old enemy Sir George which gives her much satisfaction, for she is terribly afraid of ever meeting with him again—This idea she carries so far as never to stir out without a little pocket pistol about her. I would have laughed her out of fears, but she made me with a serious intent, load it for her, and teach her the whole use of it. Sir George is gone to France with the utmost expedition—he hastened from his house more like a fugitive flying for life than a gentleman setting out to travel.—I think it not unlikely that he has run away to escape fighting with somebody—for he is an arrant coward, and yet incessantly getting into scrapes that must unavoidably bring him a duel or a drubbing some time or other.

Do you know that Mason is going to be married?—One would think the man is mad, and was bent on proving that there are no contradictions too great to be looked for in the characters of mankind. After spending twenty years at laughing at, ridiculing, and reviling the sex, and thinking marriage, under every advantage of rank, fortune, education, &c. to be but another word for the ruin of a man's peace—after having made free with every one of his acquaintance in this manner—is this strange lump of volatility and sourness going to match himself for life with a termagant mistress—the off-cast of another. Certainly he deserves what he will get; nor shall I ever pity him if she beats him ten times a week.—It is Sally Manning, as vile a temper as ever formed a shrew—ugly—haggèd—and not worth a shilling—but probably many in debt. I have laughed at him pretty severely once or twice, but he grows choleric, and says a man should act as he pleases if he chooses to marry a cow. If you meet him do not spare him—he well deserves every ridicule we can cast on him.

My brother is ordered to his regiment, much concerned that he has not been able to do some service for his benefactress.—He is a grateful lad—and she well deserves it.

RICHARD MELVILLE.

LETTER XXIX.

Lord WILLIAM W—, to Mr. FRANKLIN.

ONCE more I am landed on my native shore—and what hurts me not a little in search of adventures. I gave you an account, in my last

from Parma, that I had received pressing calls into England, to see my long lost Julia—I hastened with all the speed of unabated love, and yet arrived too late. There never was a man so marked by fate to be the sport of fortune. It is a strange tale, but I will be brief in relating it.

My worthy friend, Sir Philip Egerton, accidentally met with Miss Benson at a masquerade, and formed an immediate acquaintance with her.—He waited on her the next day, to make known the state of my heart to her—and to inform her, that her absence had made me the most miserable of mortals. He put into her hands a series of letters to prove the falsity of the accusation I laid under at Florence, from her, and her uncle, Mr. Mellish. In a word, he convinced her that I was innocent—and he had so much regard for my repose, as to question her frankly concerning the state of her inclinations—lest any new attachment or connection should have obliterated the memory of me. The account he gave me was very favourable to my wishes; and made me the happiest being in the world. He waited on the duke my father, and laid the whole affair before him—he was introduced to Miss Benson, admired her infinitely, and was the eagrest creature breathing to hasten me home, that the nuptials might be immediately celebrated.

Julia lived in a house in Pall-mall, in an elegant and genteel manner. Her uncle left her above thirty thousand pounds, besides many valuable collections. From my knowledge of her, I am clear, that no person in England would make a better or more respectable figure. In the midst however of her prosperity, her brother commenced a law-suit against her for no less than the whole fortune left her by Mr. Mellish. He made this

this claim under the sanction of a will of a later date, than that by which Julia inherited. By the testimony of several witnesses, though under the cloud of some very suspicious circumstances, he carried his point, and stripped this most amiable woman of all her fortune, and left her indebted to him eight thousand pounds. The wretch threw her into prison: my father immediately paid the money; and bought her house and every thing it contained, of her brother, at one bargain—and kept the servants together, determining directly to re-instate Miss Benson till my arrival, when the marriage would obliterate the memory of the misfortune; and as to the loss of the money, the old duke valued it not—he was so charmed with the woman, that the greatest fortune he thought could add no lustre to her.

Such was the plan; and Sir Philip Egerton was dispatched to release her from confinement—but incredible to tell!—she would not be seen, and uncommon means were taken, first to see, and then to take her from confinement. At last, he conducted her home to Pall-Mall, where she found every thing as she had left it—she was very low and pensive, and seemed much to brood over her ill fortune; his endeavours to assure her, that the loss or gain of her fortune was not an object of any consequence, seemed not to make any impression on her. The next morning he called on her—she was gone out!—Again he called—not come home!—In a word, she was gone off, and nobody knew where.

Sir Philip assures me, from the conversation he has had with her, that the motive for this action is mere pride. She could not bear to make a connection, while she was an object rather of pity than envy. I know her well; and though her

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mind is more polished than nine-tenths of woman-kind, and stored with sense, and an understanding superior to her sex—yet she is open to the attack of chimeras of her own imagination, and capable of taking and sustaining the boldest resolutions.

It is astonishing to conceive what her plan can be; she was utterly destitute of money—and in all probability has not a friend, or relation, to whom she can apply for assistance; her own family are her most violent enemies. Besides, I have no idea that she would ever submit to petition any one. My father had given Sir Philip bank-notes to the amount of five hundred pounds to lay upon her toilet for present use—these she left behind her. Perhaps she may have fifty or an hundred guineas by her—but what is that for a woman used to affluence and every elegance of life. In a word, she is retired to some unknown place, and cannot fail of being soon in great want, and exposed to all the miseries to which poverty leads.

This Mr. Franklin, is the situation of the woman I love with an affection beyond the power of expression. I feel for her every wretchedness that can befall human nature—and I tremble when I think on what may befall her. Zaffini is yet in England!—Miss Benson's misfortunes hitherto cannot be owing to her; but in case she was to meet with her, while she is thus defenceless and exposed, what would be the consequence! Never was man more unhappy than I feel myself at present. It is a most miserable situation—out of which I must either soon be removed—or rather cease to live. Before I heard of her, after our long separation, I was comparatively happy—but to be conducted almost to the possession of supreme happiness, and then at once snatched from the prospect and hurried into misery, is a trial too severe

severe for me to withstand. I cannot think of the fate which may befall that amiable woman, without shivering with horror.

I am laying plans every hour with Sir Philip to discover her retreat; but we can fix on none that have any prospect of success. What course to take, I know not. In case I continue much longer in ignorance of the event that has befallen the woman I adore, I shall leave this country for ever, which will be perfectly hateful to me. My father talks of a journey to the South of France for his health. I shall fix in that charming country, where a clear azure sky, and serene air, with a pleasing medium between heat and cold, will probably keep my mind in better state than this foggy, changeable climate can, while I labour under misery that drives me almost to despair.

Yours

most truly,

WILLIAM W—,

LETTER XXX.

Mrs BENSON, to Mrs EMILIA WATSON.

I Shall prosecute the account I before sent you, my dear Emilia.

As I then mentioned, I took a stage to London; the company consisted of two naval officers, myself, and a young lady, that seemed, from her appearance, to claim that title though I am not clear but she might be a milliner's apprentice. However, she was a passable stage-coach lady, and rather pretty. I perceived that my fellow-travellers, the sea-officers cast a leering eye at her, and would soon make love to her. I resolved not to be

be outdone in gallantry, but made much more brisk and lively advances than my rivals. I was much better dressed than either of them, which was no bad thing in my favour; so I presently found I should gain a clear superiority. I sung love songs—ogled—squeezed her hands—encircled her waist with my arm—whispered soft things in her ear—called her an angelic creature—abused the tar barrels—and out-talked them fore and aft. Oh ! Emilia ! what stuff are women made of ! —and how insignificant the means that are usually made use of to ensnare them ! —did they but try the experiment themselves, they would find that the victories of the men are void of all honour, on account of the ease with which they are atchieved. A very little trouble would have secured me this fair one for my bedfellow ; but as I was not ambitious of that happiness—I left her soon to the attack of her friends of the waves ; and took a hackney coach, which I ordered to drive about till I saw a shop where ready made cloaths are sold. We presently came to one, and going in, I dismissed the coach.

There I fixed upon a suit of plain cloaths, &c. and fully equipt myself much in the stile of a well dressed country farmer ; they took Sir George's note in part of the payment. Afterwards getting into another coach, I ordered the coachman to drive to Westminster-Abbey, that I might find lodgings in some street beyond it, in the most private part of the town. So far I proceeded very well.—I hired a dining-room and bed-chamber for fifteen shillings a week ; and I should tell you, that the people of the house, afterwards seeing me rather distressed about eating, offered to board me, which I accepted with the greatest pleasure.

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As soon as I was fixed in my new habitation, I thought of going about my affairs to Sir Philip Egerton's. I believe my dress and change of sex would have screened me entirely from his discovery, in case he should see me; but, to make assurance doubly sure, I bound a black ribbon across one eye. With this precaution I set out.—When I came to his door, I met him in the passage going out.

“Is this Sir Philip's?” said I to the servant—and having his reply;

“Sir (said I) here is a packet, which I was desired to give into your hands.” Taking and throwing his eye on the direction—“Good God! (said he) Miss Benson's.”

“Pray, friend, where did you get this letter?”

“A lady, Sir, with whom I came to town in a stage coach, hearing that I was coming this way, desired I would give it to you.”

“What stage-coach?”

“The Portsmouth stage.”

“Where did it set her down?”

“At an inn in Ludgate-street. I don't know what.”

“Which way did she go?”

“Really, Sir, I cannot say.”

“Be so good as to stay one moment while I read the letter.”

Saying this he took me into the parlour, where I sat down while he read it—I marked his countenance, and if I may judge by the changes of it, he is a true friend. Before he had finished reading, the door opened, and the man announced “Lord William W——.”

Heavens! my dear Emilia, had a thunder-bolt fallen near me, it would not have shocked me more; but I believe, with the dress of the men, I have

I have put on their resolution. I started up and flew to the window, as if it were to look at somebody I knew, who was passing by: and so escaped observation. I felt a trembling shoot through me like lightning: the meeting was so unexpected, the rencontre so sudden, that it seized me totally unprepared.

“Here is news, Lord William, that will make you leap for joy;” (reading yet)

“Of Miss Benson?”

“Yes.”

“Good God!—let me read it immediately—where is she?—how did you get it?—where—when—what—how—”

At that moment I lost my fright in the happiness of hearing him, and finding by the evidence of my own senses that Sir Philip had not deceived me. I think he is improved in person since I had that miserable parting from him at Florence. His face is as animated as ever, but I think I see in his countenance a greater maturity of expression, more dignity and openness than before. His manner and personal character are just the same. At this moment, Emilia, I found it was recorded in the book of fate that I must love this man for ever.

“Here (said Sir Philip) read these letters immediately—they will answer all your questions.”

Saying this, he gave them to his Lordship, whose expressive countenance exhibited every feeling of his heart, and gave me the purest satisfaction. While he was reading them he cried out,

“Ah! Sir Philip, did I not warn you of the machinations of that abominable woman?—You see she has been at the bottom of all this.”

When he came to my letter to Sir Philip Egerton,

“Oh! (said he) here is Miss Benson’s.”

JULIA BENSON.

41

He read it eagerly, and to the words, " As to Lord William I sincerely regret him—he is a man I truly valued, and whose friendship I should prize most dearly, if I were in a state to return him any thing but poverty."

" Gods! (cried he) what a glorious girl!"

The tears trickled from his eyes, and I saw his heart was full. At that moment I had a strong impulse to fly into his arms, and clasp him to my heart.

" It is amazing (added he) that such a woman can think there is the least difference in her between poverty and millions.—How did you come by these letters, Sir Philip?"

" I told you, my Lord, that this honest man brought them."

" Pray, friend (said Lord William to me) can't thou not give any guess where the lady is to be found that sent these letters?"

" No, my Lord, I know nothing of her."

" Sir Philip, we must immediately have recourse to the law in this affair. Let us, without delay, fly immediately to your lawyer, and consult him—we must proceed with the greatest expedition, —for that must be the soul of this business."

" My chariot is at the door, my Lord—I will attend you immediately."

I made my bow and left them, very well pleased with the event of my experiment. Oh! my Emilia, my heart is too full for utterance—I cannot express the rapidity of my feelings—I tremble at my own happiness. So long have I been used to misery, that I can hardly believe my present joy is not the effect of a delusion.—But why do I indulge it?—Do I know that the event will turn out well? Is it not yet in the hands of lawyers,

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of

of attorneys and witnesses?—and if my fortune should not be recovered, I think—I hope—I trust in my own resolution yet, that I shall have strength of mind enough to reject all thoughts of the connection, pleasing as it is, rather than be joined a helpless beggar to a wealthy nobleman. But I will not indulge this idea—I will entertain an hope for the best, and think that I have at least a good chance for being re-instated.

I returned to my lodging with a light heart, and without regret sat down to the homely board of an inferior shop-keeper. The man, after dinner, read the news-paper, and among other articles was one of Sir George Milbourn's arrival at Paris. This struck me—he certainly went thither on account of the loss of his pocket-book;—he expected to be seized for his share in the transaction. I think it is a good sign, Emilia—for such a hasty journey will have the appearance of a flight, and induce the jury to give a verdict in my favour.

* * * * *

Saturday.

I walked yesterday to Islington to make enquiries after the poor Sampers. The woman of the house gave me a sad account of them—that that brute, Sir George had again thrown the mother in jail, and had at the same time carried off the daughter; but she informed me that a gentleman in Germain-street had rescued the young lady, and she since heard that he had taken the mother out of prison. This is Mr. Melvill;—it is a worthy action, and he deserves praise for it. I am easy, therefore, on this head, as I dare say he will not let them want.

My

My landlord is a shoe-maker, and as strange a character as ever I met with—he is politically mad. Reading the news-papers is an employment with him that rivals his shoe-making, and he gives such attention to the state of all the political affairs in Europe, that I much question if he will not soon be a bankrupt. He makes it a rule to read every article in every paper—to find out every place mentioned in the map—and to read the description of it in half a dozen Gazetteers. He has taken another lodger and boarder, who is almost as great a politician as himself, and they dispute and wrangle about what they are both extremely ignorant of, to my no small diversion.

This new lodger has something singular in his appearance. He has rather the look of the remains of gentility; he dresses shabbily—has a meagre aspect—a thoughtful countenance—and most eccentric manners. He is one of the most original creatures I ever met with—his conversation is full of admirable good sense and consummate folly so equally blended, that it is almost impossible to pronounce whether he is a genius, a fool, or a madman. I have an infinite curiosity to know his history, and as I have listened with some attention to much of his nonsense as well as his sense, I have some hopes that I shall be able to get him to give me the outlines of it.

Yesterday after dinner we had a conversation that will give you some idea of this strange mortal, whose name is Musman, and he calls himself a captain.

Our landlord, according to custom, was at the papers, which imported that the Empress of Russia was deeply engaged in giving a new code of laws to her people.

Upon this Musman observed, that she could not have thought of a more ridiculous plan.

“ Why ? (said the politician)”

“ Because (answered the other) they are incapable of legislation. It is not the Empress, but the Knout that governs Russia. They are all beasts of burthen from the climate in which they live.”

“ From the climate, captain ?”

“ Aye, Sir—all countries are inhabited by animals suitable to their climate.—You see Lyons in one, and oxen in another—here you find whales, and there turbots—in one place parrots, and in another partridges : It is just the same with men—in Africa they are black—in Europe white—in England are rational—in Muscovy the contrary—in Italy cultivators of the fine arts—in Sweden mere cultivators of the earth. All this depends merely upon the latitude—I have travelled through all the countries of the world, and have universally found that the distance from the line guides every thing.”

“ Travelled through all the countries of the world!—Dear me!—You know then the political interests of the kingdoms of Tonquin and Siam. It is a most sad thing that Brookes’s Gazetteer does not give one an idea of Tonquin and Siam. Pray, captain is the King of Siam a dependant on the Emperor of China ?”

“ No—he is dependant on nothing but the high priest of the kingdom.”

“ Something like the Pope, Perhaps ?

Not much.—The high priest is the greatest maggot that breeds in the fœtus elephant in the king’s stable, which is killed for that purpose in the full of the moon Chegra, and lies exposed till it is truly rotten. The fine ladies of the court snuff up the fumes of rottenness with infinite satisfaction ; and

and the Emperor, the moment the maggot is discovered, does homage to him by sitting with his bare breech on a chair set with ten-penny nails."

" Come, come, captain—your tricks upon travellers have infected you—this is all romance."

" Romance!—Yes every thing is romance unless it is as common as eggs ten a penny. If I was to tell a tenth part of the wonders which I have seen you would stare and think it impossible; just in the same manner as the King of Siam laughed at the Dutch Ambassador when they told him that water was often so condensed in their country that men cou'd travel on it. Perhaps, Sir, you would think it strange if I was to tell you that in Borneo there is a nation who think the virginity of their wives the greatest disgrace to them—who would look upon it as an intolerable hardship if they were prevented from offering their wives and daughters to all strangers, in the same manner as you would give better eatables to a stranger than you commonly have in your family. Or, of another nation whose most polite salutation is to turn the body half round, lift up one thigh, and let a rousing f—t; which custom has made a voluntary expression. Courtiers and others, remarkable for their high-breeding, will let fly three successively in exact cadence and tune. This is reckoned great politeness, and a few have carried this polish of refined manners to such an exquisite pitch of breeding as to play almost a voluntary from their posteriors.—This certainly seems very strange, sir, to you?"

" Aye by G—does it."

" And to you, sir," (turning to me)

" Not in the least, captain, because I also have been a great traveller, and I remember meeting with a nation in the inland parts of Africa who went much farther in that art. Your Borneans made

it but a point of politeness, whereas my Africans applied it to utility. If they wanted to demolish a building, they collected the most powerfully-winded persons in the country, who planting themselves against the building, would *a posteriori* blow it down in a trice— Nay, sir, I have seen a fortress which would have stood seven days open trenches against a stout battery of cannon puffed down in this manner like a pack of cards—mere amusement, sir !”

Here our honest landlord exclaimed,

“ Mercy on me !—Why I have got either two necromancers in my house, or two of the most confounded liars in christendom !

“ Christendom, truly ! (exclaimed the captain) Why, perhaps you don’t know that Christendom is but a nine thousand six hundred and forty-second part of the terraqueous globe. The Christian religion is—”

“ Well, captain (said our landlady) I desire we may have no sacrilege—none, none of your blaspheming—you have been a great traveller doubtless, but Christendom must be a great place—all the world—I have heard John read out of the Gazetteer as how—”

“ The Gazetteer is a fool—I have written twenty Gazetteers myself.”

“ Then (said I) I presume you are an author, sir.”

“ Not at present—I followed the profession of an author sixteen years in this city—I wrote considerably more books on divinity, astrology, mathematics, philosophy natural and moral, cookery, farriery, physic, politics, trade and commerce, mechanics, criticism, &c. than would, on a moderate computation, fill Westminster-hall, though packed like herrings in a barrel.”

“ This

“ This is very surprising indeed : and pray, captain, what work are you upon now ?—I have not seen the printer’s devils after you yet. Zooks ! I had an author lodged here once that had twenty in a day. He was a good companion till he grew too conceited of his own opinion, and I was forced to give him warning to leave his lodgings. But I suppose, captain, you are investigating the manners of the Siamese, or tracing the present state of the ballance of power between the Tonquin and Thibet-Tartars.”

“ The devil a bit, Sir,—I wrote for sixteen years, and yet could scarcely earn bread. So I left off the profession, and took up that of mathematician and traveller. But I have a plan now in idea which I think may pay me pretty decently.

“ Good captain, what is it ?”

“ Why, sir, I have discovered the perpetual motion and the art of flying.”

“ Indeed !”

“ Most-truly, sir—by means of the one I have found out the other.”

“ Amazing !”

“ My perpetual motion preserves a perpetual suspension—my calculation is the velocity of seven hundred miles a day.”

“ Good Lord !”

“ And pray, good sir, (said I) to what region do you propose flying ?”

“ To the moon.”

“ You are serious ?

“ Serious !—that question indicates pure ignorance. Nothing that is not done to be sure cannot be done.”

“ Well—but suppose you are safely landed at your journey’s end—after breathing the medium of that portion of space through which you fly—
after

after eating and drinking sufficiently by the way—when you are landed what are you to perform?—Gold is not probably more plentiful there than here—and if it is, I fancy the inhabitants know what to do with it."

" The journey may turn out golden without loading myself back with so dense a metal. Look you, sir, I was sixteen years an author, and yet never wrote any thing the world ever read—I am desirous of giving the lye to professed critics. I shall surprize the world with particulars concerning the moon never yet published—I shall be read, sir."

" Doubtless.—But, captain, you will take my advice I am very certain—make this same voyage in your elbow chair—write memoirs, histories, travels through the moon, but do not take your flight from St. Paul's till all other means fail."

Who would suppose that this strange creature can run into relations of this sort merely through a talent for rhodomontade? He never wrote a book, and was never out of Middlesex—but his extemporary faculty is very quick. He lies in the most original manner I ever met with; and makes himself appear, by turns, a fool and a man of profound knowledge.—He has great learning, and (but for lying) knows the world admirably. He is poor, and that he should be so, with such an accomplishment, astonishes me.

Adieu to my dear Emilia,

JULIA BENSON.

LET.

LETTER XXXI.

Lord WILLIAM W— to Mr. FRANKLIN.

I Shall, my good friend, continue the narrative I broke off with in my last letter.

I was one morning at Sir Philip Egerton's, when a packet of letters was brought him by a country man—who should they be from? but one from Miss Benson, inclosing several from Zaffini to Sir George Milbourn. These letters discovered that this Sir George is an accomplice in villainy, with Miss Benson's brother, who robbed her of her fortune—and that Zaffini had fetched witnesses herself from abroad, being one herself, to establish the credibility of a forged will. She was to have a pecuniary reward, to what amount does not appear; but they squabbled about some remaining hundreds, which gave rise to the correspondence Miss Benson got possession of. Upon my word, she has absented herself to a good purpose. The letter to Sir Philip was to request him to oblige her by putting Zaffini's notes into proper hands, that measures might directly be taken to re-instate her in her fortune. But she kept herself concealed, saying further, that she should remain so, till her fortune was recovered.

You may easily imagine that I took fire at this letter, and made use of the greatest expedition to get her redressed. Egerton recommended his own lawyer; we drove to him immediately, and, laying before him the letters, asked his opinion—He said they conveyed no absolute proof—that they must be, themselves, authenticated, before they could overturn other proofs—but that, in all probability, when the parties came to know that we had

gained

gained such a clue to their knavery, that their flight, or confession of the fact, would, at once, induce a court to set aside the last decree. That it would be proper, immediately, to act, as if every proof we could ~~with~~ for, was in our hands, in order to terrify our antagonists. One point of consequence, he observed, was to prove the handwriting, and the existence of such a person as this Italian. That, I replied, I could do with ease, for I had several of her letters, and could also give a full explanation of her motives, &c. He determined upon immediately prosecuting all the parties for perjury—and bringing an action against Benson and Sir George for the property. Term-time fell out so luckily, that he said the action should be commenced within three days—I shall, therefore leave this letter unfinished till I can give you some account of the event.

Fortune has been as favourable as possible.—Sir George Melbourne and Benson fled into France upon the first proceedings. Zaffini is gone with them, and her witnesses with her. Two were seized at London, and condemned to stand in the pillory for perjury, the former decree is reversed, and Miss Benson is re-instated in her right. This, however, was not all; for the matter of right, without the fortune, was not what we wanted. Mr. Benson's effects, and also Sir George Milbourn's, were all seized—The latter has a good estate, so that the whole will be reimbursed in about a fortnight. Old Mr. Benson, upon being truly informed of all this transaction, wrote a letter to his daughter's lawyer, informing him that he had in possession many effects of his son's, and would

would give them up immediately—renouncing him for ever, as he said—and being very desirous of an interview with his daughter. The two ringleaders of the plot will, I believe, escape upon payment of all demands, so that their fear carried them farther than it need.

After all this success, which turns out just as we could wish—still Miss Benson is not to be found—she is not so good as her promise in the letter to Sir Philip; and I begin to tremble lest some unlucky accident should have prevented her. I shall have no peace till she appears.

My dear Franklin must now participate my joy. Miss Benson is returned—we have met—and I find her every thing, that my imagination, long wound up with an idea of perfection, had painted the original.

Her house in Pall Mall had, all along, been kept ready for her, and her servants retained as usual. I called every day to learn if any tidings had been received.—This I did, after the trial for four days successively; on the last her man told me that his mistress was at home—in her dining-room. Up I went with the most palpitating heart that ever beat in a human breast. On opening the door and seeing the angelic object of my love, in all the lustre of improving beauty—

“ My Julia!”—

I could not utter another word.—But, catching her in my arms,—wept with joy for some moments. The sweet maid mingled her tears with mine. A silence ensued, more eloquent than Tully’s tongue.

Yes, my good friend, I find this admirable woman the same as I lost at Florence.—The same that

captivated my heart with such a blaze of beauty and perfection, that no heart could be proof against such an assemblage of charms. But nothing more endears her to me, than that generous open simplicity of mind—that total exemption from all art, and affectation, which so often disgrace the best of characters. She is the peculiar instance of genuine love unmixed with duplicity.—Modest as the blushing morn; but open and ingenuous as meridian day!

Never did I spend more blessed hours—I found that she loved me—that she had never ceased to love me.—What a reward is this for the constancy, with which I have ever regarded her memory! The idea of my happiness is too great—I must, for the present, lay down my pen.

* * * * *

My Father has been to visit Miss Benson. He is quite in extasies at my good fortune. The first hour he had been in the room, he hinted to her that he expected the happy day should be very soon—and that he should give orders to have every thing got ready at Park-Hill (the villa at Twickenham) where he desired the ceremony might be performed. Julia said something of its being proper to stay some time first. But he would not hear of it. In short, the old man is extremely despotic in the whole affair, and will be obeyed—at which I am not at all displeased. His liberality on this occasion is much greater than I expected; he givcs up eight thousand pounds a year, his Wiltshire estate; and will put that seat in perfect repair for my residence. Thus, my friend, every thing I can wish is planned to make me completely happy; but principally the possession of the most beautiful

beautiful woman of her age, whose personal charms are her least excellency.

The amiable girl, I find, in her retirement lodged at a farm-house, at some distance from London ; where she took many lessons of husbandry of the honest farmer—She seems mightily pleased with the idea of country business—and is to have her farm. I doubt not but she will give me a relish for it—though I must own, I never yet entered into the enjoyment of any thing further than the idea of the beauty, and agreeableness of prospects—rural decorations, &c—but if this extraordinary woman gives an attention to the lowest offices of cultivation, her touch will convert it all to gold.

I have no doubt but every hour which I live with her, will bring to light new virtues in her mind, that deserve the admiration of all who know them. I have just discovered an instance of her generosity, which pleases me infinitely. A young lady waited on her, whom I found she had saved from the attacks of the same Sir George Milbourn, that had so deep a hand in the villainy of robbing her of her fortune. She rescued her and her mother, a poor officer's widow, from a jail, by paying their debts; and supported them, at her own expence, till her misfortunes stopped her generous hand. Is not this noble, Franklin? She now makes them handsome presents—and I am to find a husband for Miss Sampher: which will not be difficult; as she is an agreeable, modest girl, a Wiltshire living will unite her presently with the church.

Let me also take pleasure in informing you, that my Julia is one of the best classic scholars, in the stile of an elegant accomplishment I ever met with—After I left her at Florence, her uncle,

Mr. Mellish, provided a society of the best scholars at Venice, to teach her Greek by converse, and at the same time to perfect her Latin. She reads Homer and Euripides with that taste and sensibility, which we men never feel, but the amazing circumstance is, her possessing this kind of literature and knowledge, and yet having not a speck of the coxcomb in her—nothing affected—nothing impertinent. I have desired her to read passages of the Greek and Latin poets to me, and it is with infinite pleasure, I find that her criticisms are full of vivacity, truth, and candour.

My father tells me, that the first week of next month is, if possible, to make me a happier man than I am at present. In the mean time believe me to be truly

Yours,

WILLIAM W—.

LETTER XXXII.

Mr. MELVILL to Mr. FREDERICK.

THINGS have taken a most strange turn, Frederick; and I am the most miserable fellow breathing; for now all my hope is crushed.

Miss Benson has regained her fortune; and it seems that that rascal, Sir George Milbourn, has been, at the bottom, the cause of all her misfortunes, in conjunction with her infamous brother. But she procured proof of the forgery of the will, and has set it aside; and her brother, with Sir George, well knowing their guilt, fled the kingdom.

But, my good friend, the worst part of the affair is, that she is gone to be married to the young nobleman, I have mentioned more than once in

my

my letters to you—with whom she had an acquaintance abroad. This nobleman is no less than Lord William W. son and heir of the Duke of —. As the affair between them is of long standing—as his rank and fortune is so great—and as she never gave me the least reason to hope—I can have nothing to say against it—but curse my cruel stars for ever throwing her in my way.

It is very plain, that I must now renounce the idea of her, as soon as possible; because, while I love her as I do at present, it is impossible I should enjoy any thing like ease, or happiness.—And yet how difficult it is to conquer, at once a passion that is so deeply rooted in my heart! But I must do it—and the first means of executing the resolution will be to keep from the sight of her.—One glance of those eyes, that were formed but to set the world on fire, would undo a million of resolutions—and set them all at nought.

Let me have a line from you to keep up my spirits in this woeful situation.

Adieu,

I am truly Your's,

RICHARD MELVILL.

LETTER XXXIII.

Lady JULIA W— to Miss WATSON.

WELL, my dear Emilia—the affair is over, and your friend is become the sober partner of a married man. Long descriptions of ceremonies I hate—they only disgust me—all that I shall say is, that I am happy.

But, my dearest, you desire to know how I could manage to change again from a man to a

woman ; I will, in a few words, give you an account of my conduct.

Upon finding that I had gained a clear and decisive victory in law—I determined, directly, to return to my house, which, I had no doubt, was kept ready for me by my good friend, his Grace—and as the first step to it, went to a mantua-maker's, in the neighbourhood of my lodgings, and bespoke a night-gown suit of chintz, with all other appurtenances of a woman's dress complete, to be made to fit myself exactly, pretending that I was to be present at a private masquerade, and, that I should dress myself in them—the pretence was shallow ; but any thing will go down with people of this sort, when interest speaks in the same tone. My orders were exactly executed, and the whole brought home to my lodgings.

When the woman came with them, I was in a deep dispute with the Philosopher, Musman, on the burning glasses of Archimedes—but interrupted with

“ Sir, I have brought home the chintz night-gown, and—”

“ A chintz gown ! (said Musman) Why what the Devil have you to do with a chintz gown ?”

The rencontre was a little unlucky, but I thought it best to put it off with a laugh.

“ Why, captain, I intend to accompany you in your Lunatic voyage. Perhaps the moon is not inhabited, and you and I will be the Adam and Eve of it—shall I not make a very pretty lass ?”

“ Adam and Eve !—It is strange that people should give ear to such absurdities.—I have calculated exactly the—”

Here he was at once involved in a philosophical disquisition into the truth of the Mosaical account of the creation, and I slipt away with the mantua-

mantua-maker in the mean time, telling her to stay below while I went up to fit the cloaths. My orders were punctually executed—I found every particular of a woman's dress ready for me, and presently became my own sex again.—Mrs. Trollop, the mantua-maker, protested that out of all the masquerade dresses of pretended women none came up to me. I paid her, and she left me; then sending for my landlord up—he stared at my metamorphosis.

“Egad, sir, (said he) you make as compleat a woman as a man would wish to see.”

But stopping further conversation, I told him I should want his lodgings no longer—paid him—said that I left a bundle of old cloaths, which he should give his servants—took a coach, and drove to Pall-Mall.

There I found every thing, as I had suspected, ready for my reception—the servants waiting impatiently for me. I once more took possession of my house, and felt an ease and serenity I had long been a stranger to.

The next day, my dearest, who should call but my Lord!—Our meeting was in the rapid, but silent expression of long-felt, though disappointed love, now breaking from its shackles. It was a moment, my Emilia, in which our lives do not much abound.

I had soon after a visit from the Duke, his father, who was overjoyed to see me. He presently began to talk of nuptial knots and matrimonial delights, and gave me to understand that he would have the wedding very speedily, and that all must be submitted to his direction.

The ceremony was performed at his Grace's villa, Park-Hill, where we staid a week, and then came down hither, which is an estate of eight

thousand pounds a year, which this generous father has given up to his son. He has settled a jointure of two thousand five hundred pounds a year upon me, and we found this house in compleat order for our reception, which has not cost him less than seven thousand pounds more, with many presents to the amount of several more thousands.

But, my Emilia, I have hurried over these matters, that I might give you the sketch of our plan of life. I am fond of the country, though never used to it except at Farmer Clevely's. Indeed the principal part of my life has been in a continual bustle through a croud; in a round of diversion from one court to another. When England grew insipid France was at hand; when tired of France, we had recourse to Italy; and from thence we visited Germany, &c. But this round of living so much in a little while, gives me that relish for retirement, which others, I believe, can never feel, who have always enjoyed it.

Lord William is not yet fond of any thing rural, further than admiring the beauties of a fine prospect; he has been likewise ever in a croud,—and custom makes him like it. He is fond of parliamentary business, has spoke once or twice, and with great applause; in a word, all I can hope for is to get him to relish country entertainments, by way of a relief to the hurry of the world; and I have the satisfaction to find, that, in the few weeks we have been here, I have made some progres in the attempt. You remember what a farmer Clevely made me.—I shall practise now, the theory I learnt there, and my lord heartily laughs at me for pretending to know any thing of the matter; you likewise remember the little farm, my dear Emilia, which

you

you was to let me.—I shall certainly go and see it; but you must first make me happy here, where an apartment, as well as at London, will always be ready for you.

We found a large tract of land under the management of a bailiff. My lord assigned all this over to my province: and I am busy in giving orders to have the whole ~~new~~ modelled. My plan is to make rides through every part of it, for viewing not only the pleasing scenes we have of the neighbouring country, but also for examining all my crops, to see that they are kept free from weeds; and I shall make experiments on every part. I propose to have one part of the farm laid out in the Italian taste;—plats of corn and vetches bordered with vines, and intermixed with something to give an idea of the olive gardens; in the beautiful manner they appear between Mantua and Parma. Another part I propose for French husbandry, wherein I shall have stripes of lucern, buckwheat, &c. in short, I shall have twenty schemes, and certainly execute some of them. And his Lordship, by ornamenting some grounds in the midst of my improvements, will, I expect, contract a taste for husbandry.

He is fond of having much company in the house, to which I have no objection, as the rules are calculated to leave us as well as our guests, perfectly at liberty. And I have the satisfaction of finding that we bid very fair for uniting the busy life agreeably with retirement, that each may be the contrast of the other, and more pleasing from not being perpetual. But our capital enjoyment is the conversation of a few select friends who have seen the world, and understand it,—who, without neglecting will never court it,—who are cheerfully the masters of themselves, whether in a palace

a palace or a farm. You, my Emilia, must add to the number, and diffuse among us the blessings of true good humour, at the same time that you increase the happiness of your

Ever affectionate friend,

JULIA.

LETTER XXXIV.

Signora ZAFFINI, to Sir GEORGE MILBOURN.

I Received your letter, Sir George, and am very sorry you should have so much weakness in your nature as to assert that all is gone,—that all is lost,—that we are ruined,—and such womanish exclamations. What your ideas are I know not, but if I was a man, and had received such treatment, as you have had from that vile woman and her paramour Melvill, I would fight every animal belonging to her, rather than let her escape a just revenge: Never was triumph more complete than that she now exults in. She has overturned and routed us all in the affair of the will, and with such circumstances of shame, that the merits double and treble revenge.—She has broken through all my deep laid schemes,—all my toils,—and arrived at happiness in the arms of that base, deceiving, perjured villain, Lord William W—, enjoying that happiness which ought to have been mine by prior right. Thus are we all in the most contemptible situation, and instead of pitying even envy her. Had you half my spirit, Sir George, you would have cut half a dozen throats long ago; and eased us of all this pain and trouble. Had you run Lord William and Melville through the body, and trepanned their minion,—all which you might easily have done

—we

—we should now have triumphed instead of murmuring. You have a proper idea of these things enough, but want spirit in the execution. Such an estate as your's, with a masculine daring mind, would kindle glorious mischief thro' half a kingdom. As to your offers for me to return disguised to England, to lay and enter into fresh plots—it is a work I could enter into with a true relish ; but the sums of money you mentioned are too inconsiderable. I would not engage if every effort that industry could suggest was not practised to ensure success ; and, in order to that, great expences would inevitably be necessary.

I think also that you will manage your affairs very badly, if you do not bring that capital calf, Benson, again into your measures, if he has money, but if he has not, take special care to keep clear of him, for he is not formed for stratagem.

I know not what your feelings are at the idea of so much happiness being the portion of people you hate. But for my part, to whom revenge is more acceptable than life,—I cannot endure it.—I think with pleasure on their enjoyments, when the next idea is pouring poison in their cup, and planting daggers in their breasts. Nothing is so delicious as the gratifying revenge. It is a sentiment that ennobles our nature. None but the cowardly and despicable beings, who were made to be trampled on, like the rabble, can be unfeeling of this best expression of our souls— Nobly to dare all evils rather than be injured, and unrevenged. This is my idea.—I feel it strong—few have escaped my vengeance, when they fondly imagined that I would be treated like the general fools of my sex.

You may give me an answer to these sentiments, and believe me to be, &c.

MELLUSINA ZAFFINI.

LET-

LETTER XXXV.

Lady W——, to Miss WATSON.

IN my last letter I gave you, my dear Emilia, a slight sketch of our plan of life; such as I apprehended it would turn out. The more intimately I become acquainted with Lord William's heart, the more pleasure I take in finding that his sentiments of life are very similar to mine; he loves the country and retirement; but he, from a greater activity of nature, likes the bustle of the world also. I have the satisfaction of finding him always with a true relish for retired amusements. Our mornings, even when the house is full of company, we spend often by ourselves, and frequently see none of our guests till a late dinner. This conduct gives us an opportunity of pursuing our inclinations in any business or amusement. —We read—walk—ride—plant—garden—farm, as we please, with no more attendants than agreeable; and, at the same time, every one does what he pleases. Some shoot, others fish or hunt, other parties walk, ride, lounge, play at billiards, make love, or amuse themselves in whatever manner they choose. Lord William and I are reviving, if I may use the term, our Latin and Greek. We are going through a course of the classic poets, with some prose writers, which is a work of time, as we stop at every passage, which our memory tells us has been imitated by the English, French, Italian, or Spanish Poets. We compare them with the originals; and this course reminds us of every branch of reading, recalls our idea of what should never be forgotten,—and, at the same time, is a fund of great entertainment.

I have succeeded in bringing him to a relish of farming,

farming, by mixing that amusement with his favourite ones of planting and laying out grounds; so that every field and grove is decorated with a neatness that is pleasing. The borders of the field are either grass or gravel, and kept clean and in order; and every time a hedge is repaired flowering shrubs are planted among the common wood, which has a very agreeable effect. The French have a term in their language, ferme ornee; but it is a term without an idea; their ornamented farm is a new inclosure laid out in strait lines; the hedges clipt into green walls; the gates painted white; with a temple, possibly Chinese, on a colline, with an avenue of trees to it. Every thing which they call ornee is laid out by line and compafs, without the least spark of what we call taste. Water always takes a mathematical figure, either a square pond or an oblong canal, and the adjoining earth too often dances the hay in Euclid's bread and butter work. Regular terraces are common, and, if very long, with many rows of high trees, and a regular cut canal;—if these unite, you will hear as many commendations of them as of the Tuilleries.

The Italian, Spanish, and German gardens are all, precisely, in the same taste. Is it not amazing that a contempt, a defiance of nature should so much prevail among the European nations, while the Chinese have, for many ages, carried the art of imitating nature in these works to as high a degree of perfection as our greatest poets? Our Homer's, Virgil's, Tasso's, Ariosto's, Shakespeare's, &c. have not copied nature more exactly than the Chinese gardeners—though in the creative walk of poetry there would be much more excuse for monsters and capricious ideas than in the exhibition of real objects, in which

we

we look for an exact copy of nature. Much is it to the honour of England that she has thrown off such a slavish adherence to customs, though as ancient as Pliny, and that she alone should have departed from these puerilities in favour of taste and nature.

By intermixing husbandry with the art of gardening, Lord Willim has come to take a relish in it. Our bailiff is very intelligent, he reads books on the subject; drills many crops; plants lucerne and saintfoine &c. in rows, horse-hoes, in the French manner; and some of the fields, thus managed, make so neat and pleasing an appearance, that they add prodigiously to the pleasure of our walks.

Lord William is pretty much engaged, likewise, in bringing the estate into good order. The duke had much neglected it. The tenants took advantage of his negligence, and injured him much in his buildings, fences, &c.—all is now to be new modelled. The houses and barns, &c. to be brought into excellent repair; the fields thrown contiguous to each, and the rents raised sufficiently to pay the expence. These alterations will much improve the face of the country.

Such employments, my dear Emilia, with the regular amusements of the table, and our library, is certainly a rational plan of spending our time in the country. Indulge me, my dearest, in another reflection, since I am in a reflecting mood. Mankind in general spend their lives in the country; of the poor who are forced to appropriate their time to their maintenance I shall say nothing; but it is amazing that the rich should so little understand the art of a country life. To make a seat, London in miniature is the grand object of most of the great and vain. But, surely, it betrays

trays a strange want of taste! This is a plan to banish retirement from a retired life; and not so consistent as that of the French, who neglect it entirely, and live in Paris the year round. On the other hand, it is degenerating into too much rusticity, to drop every elegance of life the moment we get among the trees, and commence mere farmers or fox-hunters. These two vicious extremes, with the idle parade of the head of a party carrying his Whig and Toryism into the country, include the general rural life; and you will, I doubt not, agree with me, that all are wide of the mark, which rational people would wish to aim at.

Mixing real rusticity with some degree of the elegance and polish of the capital, and at the same time, seasoning it very sparingly with the magnificent provincial stile, will give us a just idea of a rational rural life. The mornings should be dedicated to the field; but afternoons to the drawing-room. This is the greatest distinction between the country life of the last age and the present. Formerly the negligence of the morning—the boots, spurs, dirt and undress filled the day;—of course banished the women, and brought on drinking to excess. Now, the whole family dressing for dinner, and spending the rest of the day with the women, in conversation, cards, billiards, in the library, &c. the indulgence of the former custom is banished, and a mixed life full of variety introduced in its room.

Among other company that has lately visited us, are, Mr. Melvill and his sister, and Miss Sampher:—I gave Lord William the histories of them, and, as you may suppose, he much approved my asking the Melvills, as I had received such undoubted marks of their friendship. Miss Sampher we shall keep here the whole summer. Her mo-

ther, with a little assistance from me, has opened a shop at Islington, in which I believe she will do very well.

My dear Emilia, before I seal up this letter, I must give you a few particulars which make me very uneasy. I have observed, my lord, for a day or two, of late, cold and unpleasant in his manner,—which, as we have hitherto lived in the most perfect confidence, gave me great pain. I seemed to take no notice at first, thinking it might be owing to some political disappointment of only a transitory consequence;—but it continuing, made me ask him concerning it. Finding that I had noticed his manner, he denied that any thing had happened, and, for a little while, put on a forced cheerfulness:—this conduct was so strong a confirmation of my suspicion, that it cut me to the heart; but I resolved to be quiet and make no more enquiries.

The next day I took a walk through a part of the farm with Mr. Melvill and Miss Sampher:—She was at a little distance before Mr. Melvill and me, who was leaning on his arm up a hill: Lord William, as we were turning a hedge, met us, he stopped his horse short, looked oddly, and turning about, rode off.

What! in the name of goodness! thought I to myself, can be his meaning!—He certainly has met with some secret misfortune,—or has taken some disgust unknown to me:—but it is in vain to form an idea of what one can never discover.

I shall have no happiness till I know the bottom of his heart, which never yet was secret to me.

Adieu.

JULIA.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

Lord WILLIAM W— to Sir PHILIP EGERTON.

My dear Sir Philip,

I Need not tell you, that in my last letter, I proved myself the most happy of mankind. In this I shall as certainly shew myself the most miserable. I have a tale to tell you, my good friend, that will surprize you as much as it has wounded me.

You must remember a man, Mr. Melvill, at whose house Julia, by accident, took refuge, when driven from Sussex—That tale, by the way, I have often thought, of late hung very badly together—it has given me much uneasiness. The circumstances also which I have found in your letters to me, while I was abroad, which I have been looking into, have all the appearance of his being in love with Julia. Let me, to all these, add, that she proposed his visiting us in Wiltshire. Now, Sir Philip, you may say that such a chain of circumstances might happen by accident—but, most assuredly, it must be by a strange system of accidents, that they should all apparently carry the same face.

I know that by this time your friendship for me is alarmed—“ You will say I am tinctured with jealousy—that jealous people never see clearly—and an hundred other common place assertions, all extremely true and just, but no proof that I am mistaken.”

But what is worse than all these circumstances, Sir Philip, I received by the post the following anonymous letter, which though ever of suspicious import, yet coming on the neck of many similar

milar circumstances, I must own, makes me very uneasy.

“ My Lord,

“ One who is truly your friend, takes the liberty of addressing you in this manner. Your wife is one of the most accomplished of women—and you are happy in the possession of her. Render that happiness as lasting as possible, by keeping her perfectly true to you—in mind—as well as body. There is a man, with whom she once had connections ; which I was in hope had been totally dropt; but hearing that that man is now in your house, and that till he came to it he was no acquaintance of yours', I cannot forbear giving you, at least, a hint to be upon your guard.

“ Your Friend,

“ ——.”

I can easily form to myself an idea of what you may say to this letter—but granting the whole force of your argument, are not the facts true? And do they not give very great reason to suppose the deductions true also? Melvill had a very mysterious acquaintance with her before her marriage—I knew nothing of this Melvill—and yet he is the first person she brings down to my house.

The receipt of this letter filled me with disquiet. I watched their conduct narrowly ; and, Sir Philip, if ever suspicion was just, mine is : he is in love with my wife. I see it in every motion of the eye—in his whole manner—were you here you would pronounce the same. I cannot say, that she returns the compliment—but women are more artful in these affairs—and can better disguise their ideas:—depend upon it that I am right, and not only am—but with reason too, the most

most miserable of mankind—but as if proof upon proof was with accumulated evidence to convince me of their intimacy, she asked me soon after to take a walk in the farm—it did not suit me; then she took the opportunity, I suppose, knowing of my absence, to ask Melvill to walk with her; for, as I was riding, to see the repairs of the farm, turning short through a gate, who should I meet but her and him alone, walking arm in arm! The sight shocked me, but, recovering my surprise, I turned hastily about and rode off. Sir Philip, when a man has a house full of company, is it not a little strange, that his wife, knowing her husband could not be with her, should fix on one person alone to walk with her—and that person to be the suspected one? You may indeed say that chance might have it so—and it is most true—chance to be sure might be so kind—but a man must be a dupe indeed, to attribute all that to chance. And, I doubt not, I shall be witness to many more kindnesses of this same blind chance—till I find it time to rush in and cut the thread of the very existence of chance.

I am more unhappy than I can express—full of ten thousand suspicions that haunt me night and day. She is dreadfully artful; for she carries herself in the very semblance of the most perfect innocence—and puts such a face upon her guilt, that you would swear the purity of heaven could be as soon corrupted. But I am clear, she must have a degree of guilt in suffering these appearances:—appearances are themselves guilt—a woman should never suffer them.

I will write to you again soon.

WILLIAM W.

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LET-

LETTER XXXVII.

Sir PHILIP EGERTON to Lord WILLIAM W—

MY dear Lord, I have a sincere friendship for you, or I would not take the trouble of replying to a letter, which seems, to me, to be dictated by some enemy of your repose—rather than by yourself. Is it possible, that you can be so suddenly changed, as to listen to the horrid suggestions of a groundless jealousy!—a jealousy not of a woman, whose doubtful character of affection would make one receive such impressions with the utmost caution; but of one whose spotless fame—and long and tried affection, should be very far from suffering even the most distant idea, so injurious to her love and honour.

As to that vile letter, which, I apprehend, must undoubtedly come from a bitter enemy, merely to disquiet you, and fill you with jealousy—I give no credit to it. It is utterly to be rejected, did it unite with ten thousand proofs. No friend would ever think of such a transaction—and what credit should, in prudence, be given to the suggestions of an enemy! Surely, my Lord, your own understanding must convince you strongly enough of the propriety of this observation.

But how utterly improbable is the whole affair? On account of the friendship I bear you, I will recapitulate the whole of this affair.—Miss Benson, when driven from Sussex, takes refuge, by accident, at the house of Mr. and Miss Melville. This “tale hangs together badly,” you say. Pray, in what manner would you have it hang together? Is it impossible, or utterly improbable, that she, who had no friends in London, should accept the offer

offer of a stranger? "But this stranger she asks down "to Wiltshire!" I should have had a very bad opinion of her, if she had not. She spent some months at his house. It would have been very extraordinary, indeed, if she had made that slight return to their civility. But the heinous offence is, "walking with him arm in arm;" which, by the way, I have no doubt, but she would have done with every gentleman there. My friend, you must consider, that her ladyship has not been brought up in the true English, starched behaviour, which transfers all the guilt of concealed intimacy to the idle freedom of common life among the higher ranks of people. One would think you were the son of a cit, to take offence at any liberties your wife uses of that sort. She has had a universal education—has seen the world—and despises nine-tenths of it most cordially; but she has learnt an easy general freedom of intercourse with all, and never dreams of your being the least offended at any nonsense of that sort—as how should she? She has no idea of any thing but the purest innocence, with which all such freedoms are then perfectly consistent.

But, my Lord, the mind of your Julia, well understood, is a better explanation of her conduct, than ten thousand such observations. As her soul knows not a thought to your dishonour, or any guilt, so her natural clearfulness—her noble, unsuspecting nature—the generosity of her mind—her refined way of thinking—in all things so superior to the generality of the sex. These, my Lord, will not allow her to act with a circumspection and reserve, which renders women suitable wives to the jealous of our sex. I will answer for it, there is nothing she hates more, than that general circumspection, which would in your present

present disposition of mind, be necessary to convince you, that she was innocent. How in the name of common sense, is a bold, free, generous woman to act with that caution and duplicity necessary for the purpose? Believe me it is an absurdity to think of it.

This my Lord, is the first motion of the detestable passion, jealousy, in your heart. Destroy the monster on his first appearance; or take my word for it, he will destroy you. Make use of your understanding, and of those liberal ideas, which a general converse with the better part of the world cannot but have raised in you. And at all events, remember that you and her ladyship too, have most bitter enemies; from whose initteracy and plotting dispositions, every thing is to be apprehended. For the sake of common sense, do not forget the reasons Zaffini and Sir George Milbourn have for stimulating them to revenge. Forget not Zaffini's journey to England before, for no other purpose but to gratify that passion. In what can they so severely punish you, as in infusing, Iago like, the stings of jealousy?

Once more, my Lord, let me persuade you to call up the native dignity of your disposition—and use it to the extirpation of sentiments, so infinitely beneath you. I cannot but flatter myself that you will no longer listen to the suggestions of that vile *dæmon*, jealousy, which ought to find an entrance only in the basest minds.

One circumstance in your letter I shall not overlook. You say you are certain Melvill is in love with your wife. This is very possible, without her knowing any thing of the matter. She is a woman, you must allow, for whom any man might conceive that sort of pure affection, which never passes further than the heart or eyes. I

think

think it utterly impossible, that you should have read her right ; but I must strenuously urge, that if you have been ever so acute, it brings not a shadow of guilt upon your wife.

Adieu ; I shall take the first opportunity to be with you, to see what reasons you have for this outrage upon your own honour.

Yours

Most truly,
PHILIP EGERTON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. MELVILL to Mr. FREDERICK.

MY whole life, I think, is to pass in a scene of contradictions. I told you that as I had lost all hopes of Miss Benson, I should, and did, determine to forget her as soon as possible.— This, truly, was my resolution, which I had mustered up with all the philosophy, of which I was master. But, my good friend, vain are the effects of philosophy, when passion comes in competition. My sister received a letter from Lady Julia W. inviting her into Wiltshire ; and inclosed came a card to me from his Lordship, her husband. This, at once, overthrew all my fine-spun resolutions, and I became without remorse, the dupe of my love ; for I can call it by no other name. We accepted the invitation, and your friend has been base enough—— faith it deserves no other term, to enter into the house of the man who has treated him with the utmost civility, and whose wife I yet feel, I am in love with. I cannot either in justice or in honour, forgive myself this voluntary rushing into misery for the sake of present happiness. What could induce me, who was determined to conquer an unhappy flame,

flame, to come again into the constant company of a woman who cannot be viewed without affection—and by me without the strongest passion—a passion much the more violent for having been some time smothered!

While my present dream lasts I am the happiest being imaginable—I see her—I converse with her—I hear her talk—she moves before me in all the grace of beauty's queen: I hear her sing—I walk with her, and—in such a situation, who that had once loved her—once I did I say? that had never ceased to love her:—Who could stand such dangerous opportunities of falling yet deeper into the fatal infatuation?—How am I to extricate myself?—On what twig must it be sustained?—I am lost for ever!—absolutely lost in perdition!—and have no hope of recovering from a delusion, which now overwhelms my soul! What am I to do? Tell me, my friend, that I may, if possible alleviate the fate that awaits me—and not sink entirely.

The amiable Julia has not an idea of my passion; if she guessed it—the purity of her virtue would banish me, in a moment from her house, and give a stiffness to her conduct, which I should see in an instant. She talks to me with the kindness of familiarity—with an air of friendship, that cuts me to the soul. I feel myself, upon the whole so embarrassed, that I know not how either to go or to stay. Our visit was to be for the principal part of the summer; but I feel plainly, that if I was to venture to stay half that time, I should rush into some most preposterous conduct, and fall a sacrifice to absurdity.

The resolution which I form in those moments, when I have any use of reason, is to leave the house the instant I can bring myself to the bold determination

determination of tearing myself from the company of the woman, for whom alone I desire to live. Out of her company the sun shines not to me: a dark cloud covers the world: all is night: all is solitude: and if I leave her to-day, tomorrow I exist no more.

Write to me, for I have need of council, though I have not courage to pursue it.

Yours,

RICHARD MELVILL.

LETTER XXXIX.

Lord WILLIAM W—, to Sir PHILIP EGERTON.

I Received your friendly letter, for which I am much obliged to you, but all your reasoning is proved to be erroneous. I shall give you no arguments in answer to it, but unfold a plain narrative of facts, which will shew you how little reason you have to laugh at what you call my jealousy;—be not alarmed at the letter's not being written by myself—you will in the sequel know the reason.

I told you in my last, that I watched Melvill and my wife, with the most scrutinizing eye. I did it, my friend, to a dreadful purpose—The eternal ruin of all my peace.

I was riding through the park in a pensive mood, meditating on the miserable fate of having so much reason to suspect the woman I adored, when I was suddenly accosted by a gentleman whom I had never seen before.

“ Lord William! (said he with an earnest air)—I am the man that sent you the anonymous letter

con-

concerning your wife. You know me not, though I am most highly indebted to you—I will—”

“ Stop, sir!—(replied I) your damnable letter has filled me with torment. And let me warn you, before you proceed, that unless I have absolute proof of my wife’s falsehood I will hear no more.—I will have no suggestions—give me proof, or by heaven this hand demands your life.—”

“ Pardon me, my lord, this affair in which I am engaged for you honour, more than my own safety, makes it necessary that I should remain unknown at present.”

“ Can you give me proof?”

“ I come for that purpose:—to convince you that my suggestions are not false.”

“ Name me this moment the circumstance.”

“ Your wife dishonours you with Melville.”

“ Villain! I want proof and not assertion. By heaven, if I had—”

“ Would your passion hear me, you should have it. You are this day going to Salisbury on business?”

“ I am.”

“ Your wife knows it?”

“ She does.”

“ Change your mind suddenly—return home—go directly to bed—and you will find—”

“ Find what?”

“ At midnight Melville will enter your bed chamber.”

“ Is it possible?”

“ By this prove the truth of what I wrote—and what I have now said.”

“ I will indeed prove it.”

“ But all this is on one condition.”

“ Name it.”

“ That

" That you do not, in the first violence of passion, betray yourself. Seem as if asleep—you will then be the better convinced."

" I will."

" Be contented with the sight of him. When he finds his mistake, he will of course retire—do not then discover yourself to him—the day after will be time enough."

This was sufficient for me. I galloped away with a soul as full of anguish as ever mortal's that felt the severest woe. I returned home, told Julia I should be back again from Salisbury in a day or two, and hid my perturbation of mind, as well as possible. According to the plan I returned at night—got home between eleven and twelve, and enquired if their mistress was in bed, was answered in the affirmative. I silently slipped up stairs and went to bed, taking the precaution of having my sword by the bedside. The art of this woman, Sir Philip, must exceed all bounds—she did not start at my return, nor seem the least surprized. No sleep closed my eyes; I waited with the same cursed anxiety that a malefactor waits for execution, but with a torture far superior. Between one and two in the morning, I heard a slight noise at the door—it opened—and in came Melville dressed, but with his night-cap on—he advanced toward the bed—" My dearest Julia!" (said he in a low voice) " I am come according to my promise to enjoy heaven in your arms!—She awaked then but did not hear him, I believe—" " What's that?"—she cried.

But I could restrain myself no longer—I sprung out of bed, and seizing my sword—

" Villain here receive your punishment—"

He was as quick as myself, for he drew a rapier of such an enormous length, that in the second

pass he ran me through the body—I could make no defence with my small sword. Upon this, he fled without any noise.

The wretch was out of bed by this time. I was leaning against the bed-post, she ran to me.

“Stand off—(said I) and hear me.—Your villainy has prevailed—I am killed—though first dishonoured by you:—the coward is fled—he is ready to enjoy heaven in your arms—but take this prevention, vile woman.”

Saying this I plunged my sword in her bosom, and she fell the victim of just resentment.

The noise awaked Sir Edward Fanshaw, who laid in the next chamber—he ran in, and after all the surprize, which you may suppose in such cases;—he ordered me to be carried out of the room, and put into his bed:—a surgeon has just dressed my wound, and pronounces it mortal.—I immediately called for my secretary to write this, as the best way in which I can employ my few remaining moments, is to give you a full relation of the whole affair, to vindicate my memory from the aspersions of lying tongues.—A man in my situation has no interest in speaking any thing but truth. I shall not describe to you the state of my mind—though all I have done is right—the cruelty of my fate overwhelms me. If I die not presently of my wound, I speedily shall of the fire that has seized on my brain.

Adieu for ever.

With this comes a will, which
I have just executed.

WILLIAM W.—.

LET-

LETTER XL.

Signora ZAFFINI to Signora TIANE:

UPON my leaving Italy again, I promised you a relation of my expedition to England, as soon as I had materials enough for a letter; but, my dear friend, events crowded on so quick, that I have had no time to perform my promise, but you shall now have the journal I intended.

You well know what reason a woman of my spirit had to be offended with the faithless English lord, who has already felt much from my vengeance—and with the woman who dared to rob me of the only heart I fully prized. Disappointments in my revenge only sharpened the edge of it. I never ceased burning with an eager desire to complete the ruin of the man and woman who had made me completely miserable. With this view I embarked in the plan, which carried me before to England, and the sad success that attended the expedition, after the most flattering appearances, enraged me the more. I readily listened to proposals from Sir George Milbourne for a second attempt,—and after agreeing on the terms, went with the greatest speed to London.

There I had a conference with that baronet.—I know not whether I ever gave you his character. He is a strange mixture of violence and supineness—sometimes he affects to be brave, and, I really believe is so; but those moments bear no proportion to the continuance of his pusillanimity: for he is in general a vile coward: as fond of revenge as I am; has much invention; foresees every difficulty, and knows how to oppose it, provided it is not in his own person. And estate of three thousand pounds a year enables him to be very active in mischief.

I found that Lord William W—— was married to Miss Benson, and that they were at a seat in Wiltshire. We debated how we might best gratify our revenge. The greatest object was to make them both feel our vengeance equally, and at the same time, if we could manage it, put Sir George in possession of the lady's person, at least for a night or two. The attempt was dangerous. As a preliminary to it, he had already sold that part of his fortune which consisted in land, and was then remitting the whole to Holland, to be vested in the bank of Amsterdam, as in case of ill success, or disagreeable consequences, he purposed retiring with me into Italy. He said that he should take lady W—— to satisfy his revenge, and that I might do what I pleased with her husband to satisfy mine. But this I observed was reversing the order of nature, because he ought to be better able to deal with the man, and I with the lady. It ended in an agreement to act in concert. — My plan, in which he readily concurred, was to take every method of rendering Lord William jealous of his wife, as that would make him instrumental of his own misery, and play us every card we wished. We gained information that Mr. Melvill, who had before played Sir George a disagreeable trick, by rescuing Miss Sampson, was on a visit at my lord's in Wiltshire, from the connection which had subsisted between him and Miss Benson, we determined he was the man whom we should endeavour to make lord William jealous of.

Our first step was to write an anonymous letter to his lordship, as from a friend, to make him watchful of his wife and Melvill. And then we determined that I should dress myself like a foreign gentleman, and by some means become his visitor, at the same time as Sir George also, in dis-

disguise, should get acquainted with the servants, and, if possible, an admittance in the house, to be ready to unite with me in any enterprize that was necessary.

All this we executed speedily. I forged a letter from the Count de Malviggia at Placenza; recommending myself under the title of Signor Strozzi, to Lord William W——; having taken measures for disguising myself in such a manner as not to fear the eye even of an old acquaintance. I was received with great politeness both by my lord and lady. Sir George succeeded better than I expected, for he improved on the hint, and got hired as a footman in the family.

We both being thus on the very scene of action, had opportunities of marking the effect of the letter. It operated just as we could wish—his countenance was full of suspicion, and he eyed Melvill and his wife with such a penetrating, anxious, inquisitive air, that we had no doubt but his whole soul was poisoned to our wish.

Nothing could be more fortunate than fixing on Melvill for our man, for I could see, past a doubt, that he was in love with Lady W——. His eyes told me this as a truth, that I could not mistake; hence it was the easier to inspire Lord William with the keenest jealousy.

But several days passing without matters coming to a crisis, as we expected; we planned a hotter scene of action. After some debates, we determined to contrive, in the night, to steal Melvill's cloaths out of his room—for Sir George to dress in—in order to enter his lordship's bedchamber at midnight, and pass upon him for Melvill; but first, it was necessary to prepare him for it, in order to convince him of his wife's falsehood.

I wrote to London for one of my people to come

immediately down, to plant himself in the park, in his lordship's way—to acknowledge that he wrote the letter—and as a proof of the truth of it, that Melvill, taking advantage of a designed absence of his lordship, had made an assignation with his lady, and would come into his bedchamber at midnight. My lord received this news in a storm of rage—and threatened his life if it did not prove true—but at the same time promised to make the experiment.

As Sir George was sure to meet Lord William sword in hand—the expedition was more dangerous, than he stomached; he at first absolutely refused it—started a million of objections, and saw fear in a thousand shapes; but I asked him, “how our ~~plan~~ was to be executed, without frightening Lord William? Whether I was to fight him?” In short, I spurred him on, as all cowards must be—before I could get three sparks of resolution in him. At last he determined to undertake the affair, but not without my taking upon me the equally dangerous part of stealing Melvill's cloaths for him.

At night Sir George came to my room armed with a rapier of an enormous length—and such as none but a coward would think of using. I went immediately to Mr. Melvill's room and brought off his dress complete, without discovery. When I shewed it to Sir George, he exclaimed much at my good fortune, and wished for as good himself; adding that he had secured a retreat for us both, for a chaise and horses were ready and in waiting for us near the house.

About one o'clock he sallied forth from my room, which was near Lord William's; and I waited at the door to be ready to secure Lady W—with him—to stop her mouth in case of need
—and

—and force her immediately into the chaise.

I much wished for a second of a bold and intrepid spirit, for I had no reliance in any thing that was to be executed with his assistance.

He had scarce entered the room and made the speech, we had settled, to his dearest Julia, before I heard the clashing of their weapons. In a few minutes, Sir George came running to me,—

“ I have run him through,”—said he.

“ Then let us return immediately and carry off his wife,”—replied I.

“ He has killed her,”—(returned he) Immediately on my victory I retired to the door, there I saw Julia start out of bed, and running to her lord he run her through in a passion, and she fell upon the ground.”

This was doing the business more completely than we expected.

May I not now say, my friend, that I am revenged? I tortured the proud lord with the pangs of jealousy. I procured his death—I made him the murderer of the woman whom he adored—Can any revenge be greater than this? Yes, now I am satisfied, and shall return to Italy with pleasure.

We fled without the loss of a moment. The chaise was ready, and it carried us two stages without change of horses, then discharging it, and the necessary precautions to prevent a discovery, we came with the greatest expedition to this place, and are now waiting for a fair wind to carry us over to France. When we arrive safe on that hospitable shore, I will give you some further particulars.

In the mean time, my friend, you must congratulate me on the uncommon success of my expedition. We did not intend death indeed to

Lady

Lady Julia W—; but the circumstances of the fond husband's being the murderer of his wife, which in his right senses would have been dearer to him than his own soul, is an action so full of horror to his heart, and every feeling of humanity, that we do not regret it. It makes our vengeance yet more complete than we expected—and as such I am satisfied.

Adieu,

I am truly Your's,

Weymouth.

MELUSINA ZAFFINI.

LETTER XLI.

Mr. FRAMPTON (Secretary to Lord William W.) to Sir PHILIP EGERTON.

SIR,

IN obedience to my master's melancholy command, I have now taken up the pen to give you the recital of the unhappy events which have distracted this good family since his lordship wrote to you last. By his orders I shall be explicit in the account, writing, as nearly as my memory will allow, whatever was said and done.

Upon my master's being put in bed, Sir Edward Fanshaw, who was first up, ran to his room to see the state of my lady, whom his lordship, in a fit of ungoverned passion, had ran through the body with his sword. She laid upon the floor with her shift held fast to the wound—sensible, but spoke with difficulty. She was moved into bed, and the surgeon of the family no sooner bound up my lord's wound, than he did the same office to the good lady. She was in a very dangerous state—but he could not pronounce whether it was mortal or not—though he seemed much alarmed.

alarmed. The poor unhappy lady could not refrain from enquiring what had instigated her husband to be her murderer? Sir Edward gave her a short relation of the affair, with some circumstances that my lord had related to him. He told her, "that it was a jealousy of Mr. Melvill, which he had conceived for some time past. That he had received information of an intention, in that gentleman, to visit her ladyship in her bed-chamber, by assignation at midnight. That, according to this information, Mr. Melvill had actually come into the room, and not knowing of his lordship's being in bed, had addressed her in terms of love; that my lord then started out—the duel ensued, which turned out so unhappily."

Upon Sir Edward's concluding this account, the amiable lady lifting up her eyes, replied—
"Gracious heaven! what deep laid plot of destruction must this be—or what unfortunate accident, to bring about these cruel events! My honour, Sir Edward, was never untainted—It is beneath me to defend it. But let me conjure you to fly immediately, and secure Melvill, that the truth may be fully known. If he is fled, let him be pursued, Sir Edward, with all imaginable expedition. To die is not my hardest fate, but to die under such an imputation, is cruel indeed!"

In the hurry and confusion of dressing the wounded persons, and having them properly taken care of, every one had forgotten to secure Mr. Melvill. Upon Sir Edward's receiving this desire of her ladyship's, he took me with him, both of us armed, and went to Melvill's room, giving orders at the same time for all the servants to be called, and armed messengers on horseback to be ready for a pursuit. When we came into Mr. Melvill's room, he was asleep, but we awaked

ed him, and seeing us with our naked swords, at the bed-side, he quickly asked what was the matter?

“Is it possible that you can ask that after killing Lord William?”

“Killing Lord William!”

“Pretend, Sir to no surprize. It will not save you, believe me.”

“You astonish me, by Heavens, gentlemen. I have not been awake, since I went to bed last night.”

“Come, Sir, you must rise immediately—we must secure you.”

“And welcome, Sir—allow me my cloaths, and I will dress directly.”

Sir Edward was going to help him to his cloaths—but none were to be found. This occasioned fresh surprize—Sir Edward seemed suspicious, that Mr. Melvill had concealed them. But he addressed him thus:

“Sir Edward Fanshaw, I beg I may know more of the circumstances of this unaccountable affair? How was it Sir?”

“You, or one like you, came into his lordship’s bedchamber at one in the morning, and addressed his wife in terms of love and assignation: he started out of bed—and fought you—but was by a cowardly long sword run through the body.”

“Treachery by heaven! his lordship, I know, has some inveterate enemies. Let the house, Sir Edward, be immediately searched—examine if none are absent, for by all that’s sacred, my cloaths were stolen for this purpose.”

Sir Edward seemed struck with this—he left me in Mr. Melvill’s room, and went out to give orders that every one’s room should be examined,

and

and all the house searched. In about half an hour he returned, I having given Mr. Melvill some cloaths from his drawers, and he brought word that my suspicions seemed just, for the Italian count was no where to be found—nor even the new footman. Messengers were immediately dispatched all round the country, with threats and promises to influence the countrymen to be as expeditious as possible in the pursuit of them.

His lordship being informed of these circumstances—sent for Sir Edward and Mr. Melvill. Upon their entering his chamber—he said to the latter :

“ Now, Mr. Melvill, let me conjure you to inform me, upon the honour of a gentleman, what is the truth of this affair ? ”

“ Upon my honour, my lord, I am perfectly ignorant of it.”

“ You had then no assignation with my wife ? ”

“ Good God, Sir, how could you suspect it ? I never exchanged a syllable with her from the first moment I knew her, to this day, that would not have been said before you, had you been present.”

“ Is it possible ? ”

“ By heaven ! it is fact.”

“ Good God ! —the torment of my mind ! I have murdered her though she is innocent.”

“ Murdered her ! ”

“ Yes : I ran her through on your account.”

“ Then you must have been mad.”

“ That cursed count was Zaffini in disguise, or some assassin hired by her.—Sir Edward, I must be carried to my wife—let me ask forgiveness of that

that angelic woman, whom I have thus vilely destroyed!"

Her ladyship had, with much eagerness, asked after Mr. Melvill, and hearing what had passed, said, like my lord, that Zaffini must certainly be at the bottom of this. Poor lady! she was very restless till this discovery was made; but when her innocence had been so solemnly declared by Mr. Melvill, and she was told that her lord now saw his error—"Then (said she) I shall die at least in peace."—She felt herself fainting, and the surgeon that attended thought her in great danger, insomuch that they would not promise for her life, even for six hours.

His lordship was brought in upon a couch, and being rested near her bed, a scene ensued, Sir, which made such an impression on my mind, that, to my latest hour, I am sure it will never be obliterated.

"Julia!—(making a pause) you see your MURDERER! and the calumniator of your fair fame!"—

"Are you convinced that I am innocent?"

"Yes;—fully—to my confusion and my torment."

"Say no more then—I—."

"Hell awaits me—no punishment is too great—but no spirit of the damned can feel the pangs that now torture my soul!—Oh! Julia!—Julia!"

"For heaven's sake, my lord!—"

"Talk not of heaven—heaven is for thee—but not for—I dare not ask your forgiveness—"

"I give it you with all my soul—fully—and sincerely do I forgive you—and since heaven has convinced you I was innocent, I die in peace."

"Blessed spirit!—Oh! thou amiable and most deserving of thy sex—cut off in the bloom of life
by

by this vile hand!—thy virtue traduced by my cursed jealousy—The purity of angels traduced! Goes! What do I feel!—Oh! my head will split!”

My lady burst into a flood of tears—Oh! Sir, this was a dreadful moment—his lordship, raising himself with difficulty, clasped her in his arms.—

“ Oh! my dear Julia!”

“ Alas! my lord!—I—I die—the hand of death comes upon me—I am faint!—Farewell—Alas!—Farewell—for ever!”

With these words the sweet lady expired. The emotion she felt at her lord's exclamations hastened her fate; and there fled the last breath of the most amiable woman the world ever knew.

“ Heaven's! said my lord—what do I see?—dying!—dead!—gone!—Julia!—my wife!—my fair one!—Oh—Oh! my heart—Good God! Is it come to this?—I die.”

My lord fainted away at these words, and was removed. He fell into a dreadful delirium—and could scarcely be prevented from tearing out his own heart. In this shocking condition he laid near ten hours—when he seemed to doze a little with fatigue. Out of this he was awaked, on hearing the arrival of the count and the footman that was missing, who were seized at Weymouth, and forced back.

Besides this, another strange affair has happened. This footman was caught in Mr. Melvill's cloaths. They were both brought into the room to my lord, by his orders; their presence seemed a little to revive him, and his senses returned. He asked the footman, “ Now own at once who you are that have stolen Mr. Melvill's cloaths to perpetrate this infernal action.”

“ I shall not tell you—you are not my game—I assign you over to him.” (pointing to the count.)

" Yes, my lord, (said the count) I am revenged at last. Know you not your enemy—Do not the injuries of Zaffini strike you ;" (throwing off the hat and wig and appearing with a different countenance.)

" Just God ! a spirit broke loose from hell could not have carried revenge so far."

" Thus shall it fare with all that injure me. Vile wretch ! I hated and despised you—I swore eternal vengeance, and I now gratify my eager eyes with seeing thee thus humbled—thus dying by my orders—and the murderer of your innocent wife !"

These words affected my poor master so much that they threw him again into his delirium—He called upon his Julia in the most piteous manner—started, as if he saw her bleeding under his hand—“ She falls ! (cried he) I’ve killed her. There she lies—a breathless corps.” Nothing could be more horrible than his exclamations; but his wound bleeding afresh, and his torture encreasing, he was held down in his bed—and presently expired, after a faint return of sense, in which he called upon his wife in the most pathetic strain.

Mr. Melvill and Sir Edward hurried this Zaffini, whoever he is, out of the room. He ordered him to be guarded, together with the person, in the disguise of a footman. Sir Edward said, “ that the stranger would be hanged of course, but that as to this Zaffini, who seemed to be foremost in the mischief—that he should himself take charge of him, and punish him according to his deserts—though not allowed by law,—what his intentions are, I know not.”

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to give you as exact an account of this tragic affair, as I am able. It is one of the most horrible ever heard of—God forbid I should again be witness of such an one ! The family is dispersing, and this house, which was so lately the residence of pleasure and every happiness, is now the habitation of misery. The old duke is arrived—and so dreadfully hurt at his son’s unhappy end, that the physician thinks it will be fatal to him. I remain Sir, most dutifully yours,

F I N I S.